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MORNING-GLORIES,

AND OTHER STORIES.

BY L. M. ALCOTT,

AUTHOR OF

"LITTLE WOMEN," "LITTLE MEN," "OLD-FASHIONED GIRL,"

ETC.

ILLUSTRATED.

"Fable is Love's world, his home, his birthplace.
Delightedly dwells he 'mong fays and talismans
And spirits; and delightedly believes
Divinities, being himself divine."

SCHILLER.



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CHILDREN'S ROOM
J. REFS

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A SONG

FOR A CHRISTMAS TREE.

COLD and wintry is the sky,
Bitter winds go whistling by,
Orchard boughs are bare and dry,
Yet here stands a fruitful tree.

Household fairies kind and dear,
With loving magic none need fear,
Bade it rise and blossom here,
Little friends, for you and me.

Come and gather as they fall,
Shining gifts for great and small ;
Santa Claus remembers all
When he comes with goodies piled.
Corn and candy, apples red,
Sugar horses, gingerbread,
Babies who are never fed,
Are hanging here for every child.

Shake the boughs and down they come,
Better fruit than peach or plum,
'T is our little harvest home ;
For though frosts the flowers kill,
Though birds depart and squirrels sleep,
Though snows may gather cold and deep,
Little folk their sunshine keep,
And mother-love makes summer still.

Christmas Song.

Gathered in a smiling ring,
Lightly dance and gayly sing,
Still at heart remembering
The sweet story all should know,
Of the little Child whose birth
Has made this day throughout the earth
A festival for childish mirth,
Since that first Christmas long ago.



MORNING-GLORIES.

“**W**HAT’S that?” — and Daisy sat up in her little bed to listen ; for she had never heard a sound like it before.

It was very early, and the house was still. The sun was just rising, and the morning-glories at the window were turning their blue and purple cups to catch the welcome light. The sky was full of rosy clouds ; dew shone like diamonds on the waving grass, and the birds were singing as they only sing at dawn. But softer, sweeter than any bird-voice was the delicate music which Daisy heard. So airy and gay was the sound, it seemed impossible to lie still with that fairy dancing-tune echoing through the room. Out of bed scrambled Daisy, her sleepy eyes opening wider and wider with surprise and pleasure as she listened and wondered.

“Where is it?” she said, popping her head out of the window. The morning-glories only danced lightly on their stems, the robins chirped shrilly in the garden below, and the wind gave Daisy a kiss ; but none of them answered her, and still the lovely music sounded close beside her.

“It’s a new kind of bird, perhaps ; or maybe it’s a fairy hidden somewhere. Oh, if it *is*, how splendid it

will be!" cried Daisy; and she began to look carefully in all the colored cups, under the leaves of the woodbine, and in the wren's-nest close by. There was neither fairy nor bird to be seen; and Daisy stood wondering, when a voice cried out from below,—

"Why, little nightcap, what brings you out of your bed so early?"

"O Aunt Wee! do you hear it,—that pretty music playing somewhere near? I can't find it; but I think it's a fairy, don't you?" said Daisy, looking down at the young lady standing in the garden with her hands full of roses.

Aunt Wee listened, smiled, and shook her head.

"Don't you remember you said last night that you thought the world a very stupid, grown-up place, because there were no giants and fairies in it now? Well, perhaps there *are* fairies, and they are going to show themselves to you, if you watch well."

Daisy clapped her hands, and danced about on her little bare feet; for, of all things in the world, she most wanted to see a fairy.

"What must I do to find them, Aunt Wee?" she cried, popping out her head again with her cap half off, and her curly hair blowing in the wind.

"Why, you see, they frolic all night, and go to sleep at dawn; so we must get up very early, if we want to catch the elves awake. They are such delicate, fly-away little things, and we are so big and clumsy, we shall have to look carefully, and perhaps hunt a long time before we find even one," replied Aunt Wee, very gravely.

"Mamma says I'm quick at finding things; and you know all about fairies, so I guess we'll catch one. Can't

we begin now? It's very early, and this music has waked me up ; so I don't want to sleep any more. Will you begin to hunt now?"

"But you don't like to get up early, or to walk in the fields ; and, if we mean to catch a fairy, we must be up and out by sunrise every fair morning till we get one. Can you do this, lazy Daisy?" And Aunt Wee smiled to herself as if something pleased her very much.

"Oh ! I will, truly, get up, and not fret a bit, if you'll only help me look. Please come now to dress me, and see if you can find what makes the music."

Daisy was very much in earnest, and in such a hurry to be off that she could hardly stand still to have her hair brushed, and thought there were a great many unnecessary buttons and strings on her clothes that day. Usually she lay late, got up slowly, and fretted at every thing as little girls are apt to do when they have had too much sleep. She wasn't a rosy, stout Daisy ; but had been ill, and had fallen into a way of thinking she couldn't do any thing but lie about, reading fairy-tales, and being petted by every one. Mamma and papa had tried all sorts of things to amuse and do her good ; for she was their only little daughter, and they loved her very dearly. But nothing pleased her long ; and she lounged about, pale and fretful, till Aunt Laura came. Daisy called her "Wee" when she was a baby, and couldn't talk plainly ; and she still used the name because it suited the cheery little aunt so well.

"I don't see any thing, and the music has stopped. I think some elf just came to wake you up, and then flew away ; so we won't waste any more time in looking here," said Wee, as she finished dressing Daisy, who flew about like a Will-o'-the-wisp all the while.

"Do you think it will come again to-morrow?" asked Daisy anxiously.

"I dare say you'll hear it, if you wake in time. Now get your hat, and we will see what we can find down by the brook. I saw a great many fireflies there last night, and fancy there was a ball; so we may find some drowsy elf among the buttercups and clover."

Away rushed Daisy for her hat, and soon was walking gayly down the green lane, looking about her as if she had never been there before; for every thing seemed wonderfully fresh and lovely.

"How pink the clouds are, and how the dew twinkles in the grass! I never saw it so before," she said.

"Because by the time you are up the pretty pink clouds are gone, and the thirsty grass has drank the dew, or the sun has drawn it up to fall again at night for the flowers' evening bath," replied Wee, watching the soft color that began to touch Daisy's pale cheeks.

"I think we'd better look under that cobweb spread like a tent over the white clovers. A fairy would be very likely to creep in there and sleep."

Daisy knelt down and peeped carefully; but all she saw was a little brown spider, who looked very much surprised to see visitors so early.

"I don't like spiders," said Daisy, much disappointed.

"There are things about spiders as interesting to hear as fairy tales," said Wee. "This is Mrs. Epeira Dia-dema; and she is a respectable, industrious little neighbor. She spreads her tent, but sits under a leaf near by, waiting for her breakfast. She wraps her eggs in a soft silken bag, and hides them in some safe chink, where they lie till spring. The eggs are prettily carved and ornamented, and so hard that the baby spiders have to

force their way out by biting the shell open and poking their little heads through. The mother dies as soon as her eggs are safely placed, and the spiderlings have to take care of themselves."

"How do you know about it, Aunt Wee? You talk as if Mrs. Eppyra—or whatever her name is—had told you herself. Did she?" asked Daisy, feeling more interested in the brown spider.

"No; I read it in a book, and saw pictures of the eggs, web, and family. I had a live one in a bottle; and she spun silken ladders all up and down, and a little room to sleep in. She ate worms and bugs, and was very amiable and interesting till she fell ill and died."

"I should like to see the book; and have a spider-bottle, so I could take care of the poor little orphans when they are born. Good-by, ma'am. I shall call again; for you are 'most as good as a fairy there in your pretty tent, with a white clover for your bed."

Daisy walked on a few steps, and then stopped to say,—

"What does that bird mean by calling 'Hurry up, hurry up?' He keeps flying before us, and looking back as if he wanted to show me something."

"Let me hear what he says. I may be able to understand him, or the bob-o-link that swings on the alder by the brook."

Wee listened a moment, while the birds twittered and chirped with all their hearts. Presently Wee sang in a tone very like the bob-o-link's:—

"Daisy and Wee,
Come here, and see
What a dainty feast is spread:
Down in the grass
Where fairies pass,
Here are berries ripe and red.

“All wet with dew,
They wait for you :
Come hither, and eat your fill,
While I gayly sing,
In my airy swing,
And the sun climbs up the hill.”

“Did he really say that?” cried Daisy, watching the bob-o-link, who sat swaying up and down on the green bough, and nodding his white-capped head at her in the most friendly manner.

“Perhaps I didn’t translate it rightly ; for it is very hard to put bird-notes into our language, because we haven’t words soft and sweet enough. But I really think there are berries over there, and we will see if what he says is true,” said Wee.

Over the wall they went, and there, on a sunny bank, found a bed of the reddest, ripest berries ever seen.

“Thank you, thank you, for telling me to hurry up, and showing me such a splendid feast,” said Daisy, with her mouth full, as she nodded back at the birds. “These are so much sweeter than those we buy. I’d carry some home to mamma, if I only had a basket.”

“You can pick this great leaf full, while I make you a basket,” said Wee.

Daisy soon filled the leaf, and then sat watching her aunt plait a pretty basket of rushes. While she waited she looked about, and kept finding something curious or pleasant to interest and amuse her. First she saw a tiny rainbow in a dewdrop that hung on a blade of grass ; then she watched a frisky calf come down to drink on the other side of the brook, and laughed to see him scamper away with his tail in the air. Close by grew a pitcher-plant ; and a yellow butterfly sat on the edge,

bathing its feet, Daisy said. Presently she discovered a little ground-bird sitting on her nest, and peeping anxiously, as if undecided whether to fly away or trust her.

"I won't hurt you, little mother. Don't be afraid," whispered the child; and, as if it understood, the bird settled down on her nest with a comfortable chirp, while its mate hopped up to give her a nice plump worm for breakfast.

"I love birds. Tell me something about them, Aunt Wee. You must know many things; for they like you, and come when you call."

"Once upon a time," began Wee, while her fingers flew, and the pretty basket grew, "there was a great snow-storm, and all the country was covered with a thick white quilt. It froze a little, so one could walk over it, and I went out for a run. Oh, so cold it was, with a sharp wind, and no sun or any thing green to make it pleasant! I went far away over the fields, and sat down to rest. While I sat there, a little bird came by, and stopped to rest also.

"How do you do?" said I.

"Chick-a-dee-dee," said he.

"A cold day," said I.

"Chick-a-dee-dee," said he.

"Aren't you afraid of starving, now the ground is covered and the trees are bare?"

"Chick-a-dee-dee, ma'am, chick-a-dee-dee!" answered the bird in the same cheerful tone. And it sounded as if he said, 'I shall be cared for. I'm not afraid.'

"What will you eat? There's nothing here or for miles round? I really think you'll starve, birdie," said I.

"Then he laughed, and gave me a merry look as he lit on a tall, dry weed near by. He shook it hard with his

little bill ; when down fell a shower of seeds, and there was dinner all ready on a snow-white cloth. All the while he ate he kept looking up at me with his quick, bright eyes ; and, when he had done, he said, as plainly as a bird could say it, —

“ ‘Cold winds may blow,
And snows may fall,
But well we know
God cares for all.’ ”

“ I like that little story, and shall always think of it when I hear the chick-a-dee-dee.” Daisy sat a moment with a thoughtful look in her eyes ; then she said slowly, as if sorry for the words, —

“ It isn’t a stupid, grown-up world. It’s a very pleasant, young world ; and I like it a great deal better this morning than I did last night.”

“ I’m glad of that ; and, even if we don’t find our fairy to-day, you will have found some sunshine, Daisy, and that is almost as good. Now put in the berries, and we’ll go on.”

How they hunted ! They climbed trees to peep into squirrel-holes and birds’-nests ; they chased bees and butterflies to ask for news of the elves ; they waded in the brook, hoping to catch a water-sprite ; they ran after thistle-down, fancying a fairy might be astride ; they searched the flowers and ferns, questioned sun and wind, listened to robin and thrush ; but no one could tell them any thing of the little people, though all had gay and charming bits of news about themselves. And Daisy thought the world got younger and happier every minute.

When they came in to breakfast, papa and mamma looked at Daisy, and then nodded with a smile at Aunt

Wee ; for, though Daisy's frock was soiled, her boots wet, and her hair tumbled, her cheeks were rosy, eyes bright, and voice so cheerful that they thought it better music than any in the summer world without.

"Hunting fairies is a pleasant play, isn't it, Daisy?" said papa, as he tasted the berries, and admired the green basket.

"Oh, yes ! and we are going again to-morrow. Aunt Wee says we must try seven days at least. I like it, and mean to keep on till I really find my fairy."

"I think you will find something better than 'little vanishers,' dear," said mamma, filling up the bowl of bread and milk which Daisy was fast emptying ; for she certainly *had* found an appetite.

"There it is again!" cried Daisy, flying out of bed the next morning still earlier than the day before. Yes, there it was, the fairy music, as blithe and sweet as ever ; and the morning-glories rung their delicate bells as if keeping time. Daisy felt rather sleepy, but remembered her promise to Aunt Wee, and splashed into her tub, singing the bob-o-link's song as she bathed.

"Where shall we go to-day?" she asked, as they went out into the garden.

"I think we'd better try a new place ; so we'll go to the farmyard ; and, while we feed the hens, I'll listen to their chat, and perhaps can learn something from it," replied Wee soberly.

"Do hens know about fairies? I thought they were very dull things, and didn't care for any thing but eating corn and laying eggs," said Daisy, surprised.

"Oh, dear, no! they are very sensible creatures, and see a deal of the world in their daily walks. Hunting for insects gives them an excellent chance to see fairies,

if there are any. Here is some corn for the biddies; and, after we have fed them, we will look for eggs, and so may find a brownie or two."

Such a clatter as there was when they came to the barnyard; for every thing was just awake, and in the best spirits. Ducks were paddling off to the pond; geese to the meadow; and meek gray guinea-hens tripping away to hunt bugs in the garden. A splendid cock stood on the wall, and crowed so loud and clear that all the neighboring chanticleers replied. The motherly hens clucked and scratched with their busy broods about them, or sat and scolded in the coops because the chicks would gad abroad. Doves cooed on the sunny roof, and smoothed their gleaming feathers. Daisy's donkey nibbled a thistle by the wall, and a stately peacock marched before the door with all his plumage spread. It made Daisy laugh to see the airs the fowls put on as she scattered corn, and threw meal and water to the chicks. Some pushed and gobbled; some stood meekly outside the crowd, and got what they could; others seized a mouthful, and ran away to eat it in a corner. The chicks got into the pan entirely, and tumbled one over the other in their hurry to eat; but the mammas saw that none went hungry. And the polite cock waited upon them in the most gentlemanly manner, making queer little clucks and gurgles as if he said,—

"Allow me, madam, to offer you this kernel;" or, "Here, my dear, try that bit." And sometimes he pecked a little, with a loud quaver, evidently saying, "Come, come, children, behave yourselves, and don't eat like pigs."

"What is she saying?" asked Daisy, pointing to an old gray hen in a black turban, who was walking about

alone, muttering to herself, as hens often do in their promenades.

"She says a cat has made a nest, and hatched three kits up on the loft, near her own nest ; and she don't like it, because their mewing annoys her," said Wee, after listening a minute.

"How nice ! let's go and find them. But do you learn any thing about the fairies from the hen's chat ?"

"No : they have been so busy setting, they have had no time for picnics yet. But they will let us know, if they discover any."

In the barn, the cows were being milked ; and Daisy had a mugful of it, warm and sweet, out of the foaming pail.

"We'll take some to Mrs. Purr ; for, I dare say, she don't like to leave the kits long, and will like a sip of something comfortable," said Wee, as Daisy climbed the ladder, and went rustling over the hay to a corner, whence came a joyful "Mew!" What a charming sight it was, to be sure ! a snow-white cat lying in a cosy nest, and, by her, three snow-white kits, wagging three very small gray tails.

"There never was any thing so lovely !" cried Daisy, as she sat with the three downy balls in her lap, while the mamma gratefully lapped the new milk from Aunt Wee's cup.

"Are they better than fairies?"

"Almost : for I know about pussies, and can cuddle them ; but I couldn't a fairy, you know, and they might be afraid of me. These dears are not afraid, and I shall have such fun with them as they grow up. What *shall* we name them, auntie ?"

"Snowball, Patpaw, and Wagtail would do, I think,"

said Wee, stroking the cat, who rubbed against her, purring very loud.

"Yes : I like those names for my pets. But what is Mrs. Purr saying, with her mouth up to your ear?" asked Daisy, who firmly believed that Aunt Wee knew every thing.

"She tells me that when she went on a grasshopper hunt the other day, as she ran through the meadow, she saw some lovely creatures all in blue, with gauze wings, flying about over the river, and sitting in the water-lilies. She thinks they may be fairies, and advises us to go and look."

"So we will to-morrow," said Daisy. "Ask her, please, if I may take the kits into the house, if I'll be very careful and give them a nice big bed to sleep in."

"She says you may ; but she must go too, else the kits will cry," answered Wee, after listening to Pussy's purr a minute.

Much pleased with her new pets, Daisy took them in her apron, and, followed by their confiding mamma, marched to the house, and established them in the old cradle which used to be hers. Pussy got in also ; and, when they were settled on a soft cushion, Daisy rocked them gently to and fro. At first Mrs. Purr opened her yellow eyes, and looked rather anxious : but, as nothing uncomfortable happened, she composed herself, and soon quite liked the motion ; for she fell asleep, and made a pretty picture as she lay with her downy white babies on her downy white breast.

When the sun rose next morning, he saw Daisy and Wee floating down the river in their boat. "Bless me ! here's company," said the sun, and began at once to make them welcome in his most charming manner. He

set the waves to sparkling with a sudden shimmer ; he shot long rays of light through the dark hemlocks, till they looked like fairy trees ; he touched Daisy's hair, and it turned to gold ; he chased away the shadows that lurked among the hills ; he drew up the misty curtain that hovered over the river ; and, with the warmth of his kisses, waked the sleeping lilies.

"Look, look, Aunt Wee ! how they open, one by one, as the light shines on them ! We shan't have to wait any longer ; for they get up with the sun, as you do." As she spoke, Daisy caught a half-open lily, and drew it up, fragrant and dripping, fresh from its sleep.

"They look like a fleet of fairy ships, anchored in this quiet harbor, with sails half furled, and crews asleep. See the little sailors, in their yellow jackets, lifting up their heads as the wind blows its whistle, like a boatswain, to 'pipe all hands.'"

Daisy laughed at Aunt Wee's fancy, and stirred up the crew of the Water-sprite, as she called her flower, till the white sails were all set, and it was ready for a summer voyage.

"It is time we saw the fairies in blue, unless old Madam Purr deceived us. I hope we *shall* find one ; for, though I enjoy every thing we see, I do want my elf too."

"What is that ?" cried Wee ; and Daisy flew up so quickly that the boat rocked like a cradle. A slender creature, in a blue dress, with gauzy wings, darted by, and vanished among the rushes that nodued by the bank.

"Go nearer,—softly ! softly ! — and maybe it will fly out again. I really think it was a fairy ; for I never saw any thing like it before," whispered Daisy, much excited.

Wee rowed in among the green rushes and purple water-weeds, and out flew half-a-dozen of the blue-bodied creatures. They didn't seem afraid, but skimmed about the boat, as if curious to see what it was ; and Daisy sat, and stared with all her might. Presently one of the lovely things lit on the lily in her hand, and she held her breath to watch it. A little shadow of disappointment passed over her face as she looked ; but it was gone at once, and her voice was full of delight as she said softly,—

“It's not a fairy, Aunt Wee ; but it is very beautiful, with its slender blue body, its lacy wings, and bright eyes. What name does it have ?”

“We call it a dragon-fly ; and it could tell you a pretty little story about itself, could you understand it. In May the tiny eggs are dropped on the water, and sink to the bottom, where little creatures are born,—ugly, brown things, with six legs and no wings. They feed on water-insects, and for a long time swim about in this state. When ready, they climb up the stem of some plant, and sit in the sun till the ugly brown shells drop away, and the lovely winged creatures appear. They grow in an hour to be perfect dragon-flies, and float away to lead happy lives in the sunshine by the river.”

As if only waiting till the story was done, the dragon-fly flew off with a whirr, and darted to and fro, hunting for its breakfast, glittering splendidly as it flashed among the leaves or darted close above the water. Daisy forgot her disappointment in a minute, and went fishing for lilies, while the turtles came up to sun themselves on the rocks, the merry little tadpoles wiggled in the shallow places, and a wild duck paddled by with a brood of ducklings following in her wake.

"Oh, dear! it rains; and we can't go fairy-hunting at all," said Daisy next morning, as the patter on the window-pane woke her up, and Aunt Wee came in to dress her.

"Yes, we can, dear; jump up, and see what a funny place I'll take you to."

Daisy thought the rain would be a capital excuse for lying in bed; for she still liked to cuddle and drowse in her cosey, warm nest. But she was curious to know where the curious place was; so she got up and followed.

"Why, Aunt Wee, this is the garret; and there isn't any thing nice or funny here," she said, as they climbed the stairs, and came into the big attic, filled with all manner of old things.

"Isn't there? We'll soon see." And so they did: for Aunt Wee began to play; and presently Daisy was shouting with fun as she sat on an old saddle, with a hair-covered trunk for a horse, a big old-fashioned bonnet on her head, and a red silk petticoat for a habit. Then they went to sea in a great chest, and got wrecked on a desert island, where they built a fort with boxes and bags, hunted bears with rusty guns, and had to eat dried berries, herbs, and nuts; for no other food could be found. Aunt Wee got an old fiddle, and had a dancing-school, where Daisy capered till she was tired. So they rummaged out some dusty books, and looked at pictures so quietly that a little mouse came out of a drawer and peeped about, thinking no one was there.

"Let's find the nest, since we don't find any fairy," said Wee; and, opening the drawer, she turned over the things till she came to a pair of old velvet shoes; and there in the toe of one, nicely cuddled under a bit of

flannel, lay four pink mites, which woke up, and stretched their tiny legs, and squeaked such small squeaks one could hardly hear them.

"How cunning they are! I wish they would let me put them with the kits, and have a nursery full of babies. Wouldn't it be nice to see them all grow up?" said Daisy.

"I'm afraid they wouldn't grow up, if Mrs. Purr lived with them," began Wee, but got no further; for just then the cat bounced into the drawer, and ate up the mouselings in four mouthfuls. Daisy screamed; the mother-mouse gave a doleful squeak, and ran into a hole; and Aunt Wee tried to save the little ones. But it was too late: Purr had got her breakfast, and sat washing her face after it, as if she had enjoyed it.

"Never mind, Daisy: she would have caught them by and by, and it's as well to have them taken care of before they do any harm. There is the bell: don't cry, but come and tell papa what a fine romp we've had."

"It doesn't rain, but it's dreadfully wet; so we'll go to the dairy, and see if any sprites are hiding there," said Wee next day; and to the dairy they went.

A pleasant place it was,—so clean and cool, and as full of sweet odors as if the ghosts of buttercups and clover still haunted the milk which they had helped to make. Dolly was churning, and Polly was making up butter in nice little pats. Both were very kind, and let Daisy peep everywhere. All round on white shelves stood the shining pans, full of milk; the stone floor was wet; and a stream of water ran along a narrow bed through the room, and in it stood jars of butter, pots of cream, and cans of milk. The window was open, and

hop-vines shook their green bells before it. The birds sang outside, and maids sang inside, as the churn and the wooden spatters kept time :—

“ Brindle and Bess,
White-star and Jess—
Come, butter, come !
Eat cowslips fine,
Red columbine—
Come, butter, come !
Grasses, green and tall,
Clover, best of all,—
Come, butter, come !
And give every night
Milk sweet and white—
Come, butter, come !
Make the churn go,
See the lumps grow !—
Come, butter, come !”

Daisy sang also, and turned the handle till she was tired ; then she helped Polly with the butter, and made four little pats,—one stamped with a star for papa, one with a rose for mamma, a strawberry for Aunt Wee, and a cow for herself. She skimmed a pitcher of cream with a shallow shell, and liked the work so much she asked to have a little pan of milk put by for her to take care of every day. Dolly promised, and gave her a small shell and a low shelf all to herself. When she went in, she carried her pretty pats in one hand, the cream-pot in the other, and entered the breakfast room looking as brisk and rosy as a little milkmaid.

It was a lovely morning when Daisy was next roused by the fairy music, and the ponies were standing at the door. “ Are we going far ? ” she asked, as Wee put on her riding-skirt, and tied back her hair.

"Up to the mountain-top: it's only a mile; and we shall have time, if we ride fast," answered Wee.

Away they went, through the green lane, over the bridge, and up the steep hillside where the sheep fed and colts frisked as they passed by. Higher and higher climbed Dandy and Prance, the ponies; and gayer and gayer grew Daisy and Wee, as the fresh air blew over them, and the morning-red glowed on their faces. When they reached the top, they sat on a tall stone, and looked down into the valley on either side.

"This seems like a place to find giants, not fairies, it is so high and big and splendid up here," said Daisy, as her eye roamed over river, forest, town, and hill.

"There are giants here; and I brought you up to see them," answered Wee.

"Mercy, me! where are they?" cried Daisy, looking very curious and rather frightened.

"There is one of them." And Wee pointed to the waterfall that went dashing and foaming down into the valley. "That giant turns the wheels of all the mills you see. Some of them grind grain for our bread, some help to spin cloth for our clothes, some make paper, and others saw trees into boards. That is a beautiful and busy giant, Daisy."

"So it is, and some day we'll go and see it work. Show me the others: I like your giants 'most as well as those in the fairy-books."

"On this side you'll see another, called Steam. He is a very strong fellow; for, with the help of gunpowder, he will break the granite mountain in pieces, and carry it away. He works in the other mills, and takes heavy loads of stone, cloth, paper, and wood all over the country. Then, on the right of us is a third giant, called

Electricity. He runs along those wires, and carries messages from one end of the world to the other. He goes under the sea and through the air ; he brings news to every one ; runs day and night, yet never tires ; and often helps sick people with his lively magic."

"I like him best, I think ; for he is more like a real, wonderful giant. Is there any on that side of us ?" asked Daisy, turning round to look behind her.

"Yes : the best and most powerful of all lives in that big house with the bell on the roof," said Wee, smiling.

"Why, that's only the schoolhouse."

"Education is a long word, dear ; but you know what it means, and, as you grow older, you will see what wonders it can work. It is a noble giant ; for in this country rich and poor are helped by it, and no one need suffer for it unless they choose. It works more wonders than any other : it changes little children into wise, good men and women, who rule the world, and make happy homes everywhere ; it helps write books, sing songs, paint pictures, do good deeds, and beautify the world. Love and respect it, my little Daisy, and be glad that you live now when such giants lend a hand to dwarfs like us."

Daisy sat still a long time, looking all about her on the mountain-top ; and, when she rode away, she carried a new thought in her mind, which she never forgot.

"This is the last day of the seven, and no fairies have been found. Do you think I *ever* shall see one ?" said Daisy, on the Sunday morning that ended her week's hunt.

"Not the kind you think of, for there are none such, Daisy ; but you have found two better and more beautiful ones than any fanciful sprite," said Wee.

"Have I ? Where are they ? What are their names ?"

Aunt Wee drew her to the glass, and said, as she pointed to Daisy's face,—

"Here they are, and their names are Health and Happiness. There are many ways of losing them, and they are hard to catch when once lost. I wanted you to keep both, and tried to show you how. A happy, healthful hour in the morning sweetens and brightens the whole day ; and there is no fairy-book half so wonderful as the lovely world all about us, if we only know how to read it."

"Then all these mornings we were hunting after health and happiness, instead of fairies, were we ?"

"Yes : haven't you enjoyed it, and don't you think you have caught my fairies ?"

Daisy looked from a little picture of herself, which Wee had drawn some time ago, to her image in the glass. One was dull and sad, pale and cross ; the other, rosy, gay, and smiling,—the likeness of a happy, hearty little girl, wide-awake and in good tune. She understood the kind joke ; and, turning, kissed Aunt Wee, as she said, gratefully,—

"I think I have caught your elves, and I'll try to keep them all my life. But tell me one thing : was the music that woke me all a joke too ?"

"No, dear : here it is, and now it is your own ; for you have learned to wake and listen to it."

Daisy looked, and saw Aunt Wee lean from the window, and take out of a hollow nook, in the old tree close by, a little box. She set it on the table, touched a spring, and the airy music sounded more beautiful than ever.

"Is it mine, all mine ?" cried Daisy.

"Yes : I hid it while I tried my little plan, and now you shall have it for your own. See, here is the best elf

I can give you, and she will dance whenever you call her."

Wee pushed a golden pin, and up sprang a tiny figure, all crimson and gold, with shining wings, and a garland on its dainty head. Softly played the hidden music, and airily danced the little sylph till the silvery chime died away ; then, folding her delicate arms, she sank from sight, leaving Daisy breathless with delight.



THE
ROSE FAMILY.

CHAPTER I.

ONCE upon a time there lived in Fairyland a family who, as is the custom, bore the name of the flower which was their care. There was the papa, the mamma, and four little daughters, Blush, Brier, Moss, and Eglantine,—or Tina, as her playmates called her, for she was a baby-elf still lying in her green cradle, and had not yet learned to use her gauzy little wings as her sisters did. Their home was in a rose-tree, among whose flowers they found all that elves could need. In some they slept with the petals drooping like crimson curtains over them to shield from wind and rain; in others they laid their gossamer garments, making them fresh and fragrant with the perfume of the leaves between which they were folded. On the slender branches hung their harps,—we call them cobwebs, and hear no sound, but to the delicate senses of the fairy folk there came airy melodies as the wind swept by. A broad-leaved plantain grew at the rose-tree's root, and there they spread their dainty meals;—little loaves of flower-dust and honey, fresh dew in red-brimmed moss-cups, a single berry prettily sliced on a lesser leaf, and eaten in acorn-cups, with cream from the milk-weed, and sugar from the red-clover

blossom, whose deep cells the bees can never wholly rifle.

Papa Rose went daily to Court, for he was connected with the royal families of York and Lancaster, and, being a wise and virtuous elf, was the Queen's prime minister. The mamma, whom her neighbors called "bonny little madam," as she came from Scotland, remained at home among the roses, for, like mortal mothers, she had many duties to perform that home might be always beautiful to those she loved. Blush, Brier, and Moss, after a morning romp with Tina, flew away to the fairy school, where they learned all manner of pleasant things which human children never know ; such as the history of flowers, the language of insects, the large utterance of trees, and the sweet gossip of the wind. All day each was busied with some useful task ; for elves are not foolish little gad-abouts, as we have been taught to think them, but people very like ourselves in the cares and troubles that come to them, only infinitely smaller than we, with microscopic joys and afflictions to match. Thus the Rose family helped rule the kingdom, kept house, studied, and played all day, and at night enjoyed themselves together like mortal families till the evening red faded and the dew began to fall.

So lived the Roses, till the watchful mother saw that a little fault had sprung up, like a harmful weed, in the garden of small virtues which she had planted in the natures of her elder daughters. Moss was gentle and kind, but sadly indolent, and as fond of play as the idlest butterfly that ever flew ; Brier, though a merry, generous-hearted elf, was passionate and wilful ; while little Blush, the fairest of them all, was vain of the bloom on her deli-

cate cheek, the blue of her smiling eyes, the gold of her shining hair, and the grace of her airy shape. Long did the mother try to cure these troublesome faults, and earnestly did the little ones promise to be good—O, very good!—when she spoke to them. But though they wept and sighed, resolved and promised, they did not heartily *try*; so nothing came of it. At last the papa said to their troubled mamma, as they sat talking in the moonlight of the naughty little daughters sleeping all about them: “My love, there is no way left but to send them to the good fairy, Star, who is gentle and wise, and will make them what we desire.”

“Yes, it shall be as you say, dear friend,” replied Madam Rose, hiding her face in a cobweb handkerchief, for it was very hard to part with all three. But being a most excellent mamma, and remembering how wisely and well the learned Star had taught many a small sinner, she agreed to the papa’s decision without a bit of scolding or fuss, though she wept so bitterly all night that the rose where she slept was wet as with rain.

Next morning, when the young elves woke and learned what was to happen, great was the lamentation, and their papa had to carry them sobbing from their mother’s arms into the car, drawn by a span of white butterflies, which waited to take them away. Till they were out of sight they waved their cowslip hats, looking backward through their tears to the pleasant home they left behind; for on the topmost twig still stood the dear mamma, lifting Tina in her arms that she might kiss her little hand to them, and in her baby voice re-echo their farewells.

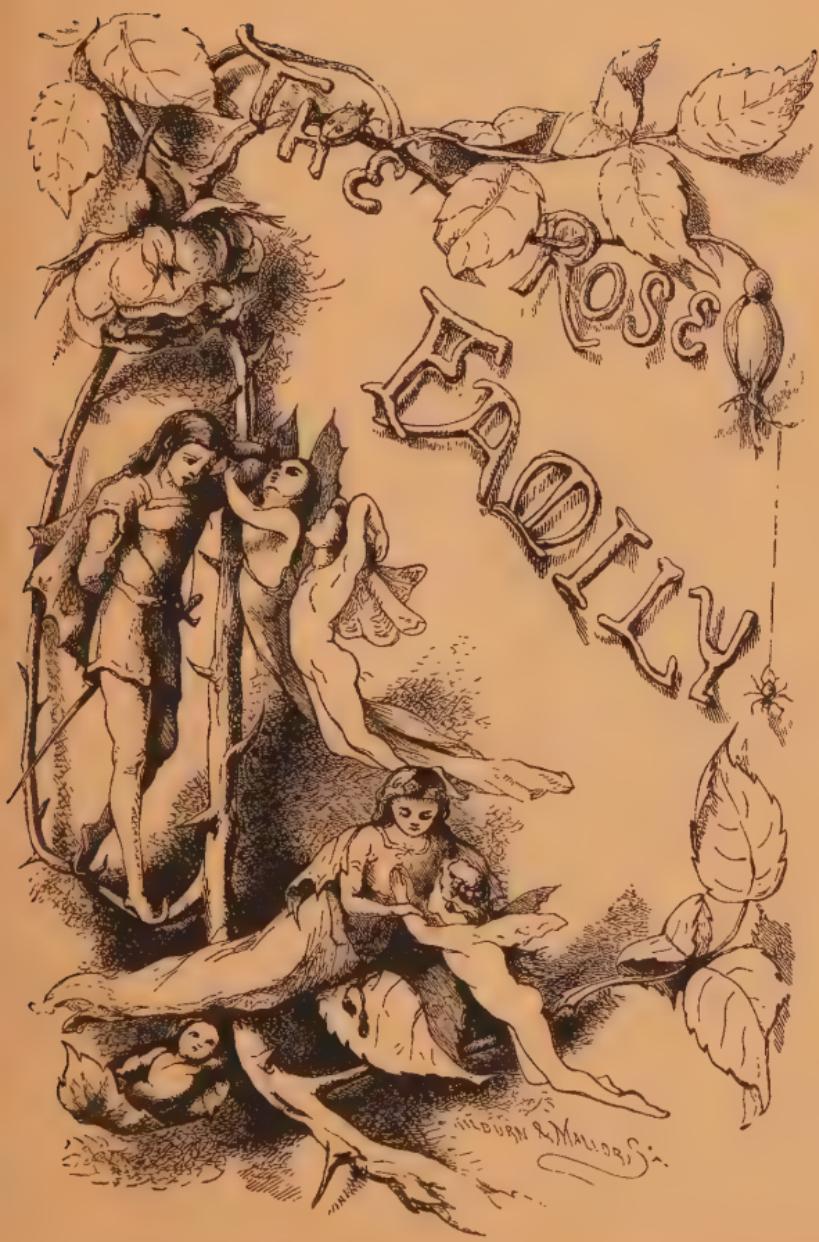
The wise Star lived on an enchanted island, weaving wonderful spells, helping the moon rule the sea, the dew

to do its silent work, the wind to carry winged seeds to desolate spots, and sending sun or shower to help them thrive. The pupils sent her were taught by love, not fear, and none had proved too wild or wilful for her gentle rule.

"How beautiful!" cried the young Roses, as they alighted near the lake upon whose bosom floated the fairy palace underneath a rainbow arch. The island was encircled with a garland of white lilies, blue water-weeds, and cardinal-flowers that glowed among the reeds like spires of flame. Dragon-flies with gleaming bodies darted to and fro, gold and silver fish glittered underneath the ripples as they kissed the shore, all the air was cool and still, and over palace, lake, and island a sunny silence seemed to brood, as if some spell secured to Star the studious calm she loved.

Ringing a harebell, whose chime echoed far across the lake, Papa Rose seated his little daughters in a great white lily, having embraced them tenderly, and, setting the flower afloat, watched it till it anchored at the palace-steps. He had sent a message by the earliest breeze that blew, for in Fairyland the winds are postmen; so Star knew who was coming, and why they were sent. Twinkling off the drops that filled his eyes as the three little figures vanished, Papa Rose turned toward home, feeling as many human fathers have felt when they have left their children behind them.

The elves found Star waiting for them, and loved her even before she spoke. A most benignant-looking spirit she seemed, clothed in mist, with a clearly shining star upon her forehead and a winning smile upon her lips. With one glance of her magically gifted eye, she saw



into the hearts before her, felt how best to teach them, and began her lesson without more delay. Calling them about her, she said, as she caressed them with the friendliest look : " My little elves, I have such faith in the love you bear your mother, that I shall use no other spell, and trust to that alone. You left her weeping at your loss ; yet it is in your power to change her tears to smiles, and make home happy, by remembering what I tell you now. Each is to work alone, with no help but the talisman I give, and the desire to become what we would have you. In each of these three drops of water from this magic fountain you will always see your mother's face as in a glass. Let no naughtiness dim their brightness, no selfish thought or unkind feeling bring a shadow to the face you love, but so live that it may always smile ; and when this is done, your lesson is learned, your separation ended. Fear nothing, but drink, and whenever you may wake hold fast your talisman and heartily begin your task."

Wondering, yet obedient, the three received the shining drops, drank of the golden water, and sank into a deep and dreamless sleep.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN Moss awoke, she found herself in a sun-shiny meadow, where daisies and buttercups nodded in the grass, blithe winds blew, birds sang, and butterflies, like winged flowers, fluttered everywhere. Here, among the roots of an ancient oak, with a mossy threshold, and vines overhanging her door, lived Madam Mouse, with her three little sons, Squeak, Nibble, and Scamper. She was the kindest and best of Quakerish mice, and hers would have been the happiest home in the field, if the excellent father-mouse had not laid asleep in a neighboring grove, with a drooping fern at his head and a cheerful dandelion at his feet. It was to this household that Moss was welcomed on her awakening. Squeak, Nibble, and Scamper opened their beady eyes wide with delight on seeing the beautiful elf, and their mother gave a feast in honor of the guest; for fairies make famous whatever family they visit.

"Now listen to me, dearest child, while I tell you about our neighbors here," said Madam Mouse, as they sat together under the vine, while the little ones played hide-and-seek in the grass, and the sun set over the hill. "Up above there lives Skip, the squirrel, and a merry fellow he is, though he has neither wife nor family to keep him brisk and jolly. But who knows what may fall out, and who can tell why the acorns that grow on the tree where Miss Nimble Whisk lives are so much sweeter than ours? Yes, yes, I fancy we shall have a wedding

this year. Next, under the brakes, lives Spin, the spider, as quiet and busy an insect as ever wove a web. Then among the buttercups there at your side Chirp the cricket, keeps house with his noisy wife and daughters, who sing half the night, when they should be asleep. Down by the rock, where the columbines grow, Light-heart, the lark, has her nest. We are a gay neighborhood, that you may believe ; for when our work is done, we dance and sing in the twilight, or ramble over the field in search of adventures."

"And what am I to do here, where all are so busy?" asked lazy Moss, fearing some task was in store for her.

"You must help each one in their work, for you will find no pleasure with us unless you daily do some healthful task to keep you happy and show you the beauty of industry. Fie! do not pout and toss your head in that disrespectful manner, else I shall send you away to stay with neighbor Toad, who has grown so stout through indolence that she can only sit blinking all day in the sun ; and that would not be so pleasant, I fancy, for she lives in a hole, and might gobble you up if no worm or fly was at hand. Think well of what I tell you, and please your worthy parents by doing what they desire. Now come away to bed ; we must be up with the sun, for on Saturday all good housewives have much to do."

Thinking her hostess a very prosy mouse, and resolving to enjoy herself in her own way, Moss followed Nibble into a tidy little chamber hollowed out among the gnarled roots of the oak, carpeted with moss, hung with deep-red leaves, and furnished with a sumptuous thistle-down bed, in which the elf soon fell asleep to the lullaby a mosquito sang outside the cobweb curtains gathered round her.

She was awakened by the young mice dancing over her bed, tapping her cheek with their little paws, and lifting her hair to peep at her blooming face, for they thought her very lovely.

“Go away and leave me in peace! I am very tired, and shall not rise yet,” she cried, as they unfurled her wings and tried to make her follow them.

“Mamma will give you no breakfast if you do not come when we call; she is very punctual, and has waited five minutes already.”

“I shall come when I like; so drop the curtain and let me alone,” was all Moss answered, settling her tiny night-cap and drawing the mullein-leaf blanket more cosily over her shoulders.

“Oh! oh! what a lazy thing! Come and tell mamma that she says she won’t,” cried the mice, frisking away through the winding galleries, squeaking shrilly as they ran.

“Bless me, what a stir they make,” thought Moss, and, instead of getting up, lay dreaming about it till the sun was high. Then she went to seek her breakfast, but not a morsel remained, and she would have fared ill had she not found a cluster of strawberries, on which she made a dainty meal. As she ate she looked about her, thinking what a busy place she was in, for Skip was at work in the oak, Spin wove away at his leafy loom, Lightheart was singing her morning song in the clouds, Chirp was hopping over the field to his work, and, close by, Scamper and Squeak were pulling an oak-leaf laden with seeds, their little tails twined about the stem, and were trotting stoutly along, while Nibble ran behind to steady the load. All were up and at work, the air was filled with a busy

hum, and the meadow seemed like a great hive full of industrious bees. Moss alone was idle, and, though ashamed of her indolence, it was too pleasant, swaying to and fro on a tall fern, basking in the sun, and listening to the song of the grass as it waved in the wind, to rise and labor with the rest ; so till noon she lay dreaming the dreams that fairies love.

When the sun grew hot, she gladly hastened to the cool oak chambers, eager to eat and drink of the good things she had seen stored there ; for Madam Mouse was a thrifty housewife. But, as before, the table was cleared ; Nibble was eating the last berry, Scamper and Squeak were washing their faces, as their tidy mother had taught them to do, and she was giving a thirsty bee the only drop of honey that remained.

“Am I to have no dinner ?” asked Moss, knowing that she deserved none, yet hoping to get a great deal, as lazy people are apt to do.

With a pert whisk of the tail Squeak cried out : “Ah, ha ! did n’t we tell you mamma would not feed a lazy elf ? When you are good, she will give whatever you ask, and you will be plump and happy like us.”

“Hush !” said his mother, “or I must put your little tail in the crack, that a pinch or two may teach you to govern your tongue, my son. No, Moss, you will find no food here unless you obey me, for I cannot take care of an indolent elf, who has no desire to do her duty and earn her bread, like the rest of us.”

“I shall not work,” said Moss, sullenly.

“Then go and live in your own idle fashion till you tire of it ; then come back, and I ’ll show you a surer way to be happy and good.”

"I shall find my own too pleasant for that, I fancy," answered Moss, getting naughtier and naughtier the more she gave way to her dislike for industry.

The little mice were so astonished at her daring to speak in that way to their mamma, that they tumbled down in a heap, and, passing by them with a saucy nod, Moss flew away to the river-side, where a hospitable lizard gave her some dinner, and entertained her till one of the baby lizards fell into a ditch and broke his leg. Fearing that she should be asked to stay and watch with him, Moss slipped away, and, sitting in a river-lily, laughed and sung with the water-beetles and the merry west-wind till the motion of the waves lulled her to sleep.

A dew-drop falling on her face roused her, and, looking up, she found the moon in the sky, and herself on the bank, where the breeze had laid her when the lilies wished to draw their curtains. The night was mild, the stars' friendly eyes watched over her, and she felt no fear; so, pillowing her head on a daisy, and pulling a thick leaf over her, she thought to herself, "This is as fine a bed as one need desire, and I shall not soon go back to tiresome Madam Mouse while I get on so well alone."

As she spoke, a sudden gust blew away her coverlet, a bat caught her up as he swept by, and, before she could recover from her fright, bore her away to his nest, in an ivy-covered wall.

"I am cousin to the Mouse family, therefore it is quite proper that you pay me a visit; but as I am a bachelor, and my house is not such as best pleases young ladies, I shall take you to Neighbor Moth's ball, close by. Give me your hand, and remember that, though I present my friends Monsieur Firefly and Professor Beetle, you must dance with me first."

So said the bat, in his disagreeable voice, as he clung to the wall with his leathery wings. Moss was mortally afraid of him, had no desire to go to a ball, and was ready to cry with dismay at the troubles she had brought on herself ; but Flit would take no denial, and skimmed away with her so fast that her poor little wings ached with the flight.

In a dell not far away Moss saw lights glancing, heard music sounding, and presently found herself in the midst of a party of night-loving insects and reptiles. Not a respectable ball in the least, for the wildest merriment prevailed. Mosquitoes, dorbugs, and frogs piped, drummed, and trumpeted like mad ; katydids in green gauze, and grasshoppers from the opera, flew about in a most indecorous manner ; fireflies whisked sober millers here and there, till their gowns were burnt and torn ; glowworms and long-legged spiders flirted sadly under the mushrooms ; and Lady Moth was as giddy as the rest, for a dissipated butterfly in scarlet and gold was there, and such an honor had not been done her balls for an age.

Pretty Moss made a great stir when Flit presented her ; Major Butterfly left Lady Moth to fold his bright wings at her side ; Monsieur Firefly was charmed with her grace ; and Professor Beetle, forgetting his mourning suit, droned compliments into her ear, and danced till his horny eyes swam dizzily in his head. Moss was dragged to and fro till she was ready to faint with weariness and fear ; but the nimble-footed spiders bid her dance on, the music played faster and faster, the friendly moon went down, and often did poor Moss long to be safe in her cosey bed in the oaken chamber, with kind Madam Mouse to watch over her sleep.

Suddenly, just when the revel was gayest, an owl darted into their midst, and bore Flit struggling away. In an instant the music stopped, the dancers vanished, and the dell was deserted by all but Moss, who, trembling with affright, crept into an empty snail-shell, and lay shivering there till dawn.

When daylight came, she timidly stole out, and flew away to rest in the sunshine among the purple morning-glories that half covered a cottage-wall. Believing that her troubles were over, she slept sweetly till she woke to find herself a prisoner in the flower, which, closing with the heat, now held her fast. Vainly she called for help, and beat upon the walls, which narrowed rapidly, while the sun shone hotter and hotter, and the air grew more close each moment. "Now I must die," she thought, "and never see my home again. O dear mamma! forgive me, and good by!" Clasping her hands together on her little bosom in despair, she felt the long-neglected talisman, and eagerly drew it out for a last look at the face she never thought to see again. Very sadly it looked back at her, and the reproachful tenderness that filled the loving eyes so wrung her heart with sorrow and remorse, that, with a bitter cry, she sank down, and lay there like one dead.

A breath of fresh air, sweeping through her prison, recalled her to life; and the first sound she heard was a cheerful voice that said: "It is no bee caught in the morning-glory cup, but the loveliest fairy ever seen. She is not dead, grandmother, for she moves her tiny wings. What can I do for you, dear little creature? I am so large, I fear to hurt you with the gentlest touch. Lie here, and get your breath again, but do not be afraid of

me, because I love your race, and often hear wonder-stories of you from the humming-birds that live among my flowers."

Lifting her dim eyes, Moss saw a child's pitying face above her ; but she could only smile her thanks and kiss the small hand where she lay. Placing the elf on a vine-leaf that fluttered in the wind, the child went back to her wheel, for no bee was busier than she ; and as she spun, she sang like any bird, because the blind old grandmother, knitting in the sun, loved to hear her cheery voice above the music of the wheel.

"O flower at my window,
Why blossom you so fair,
With your green and purple cup
Upturned to sun and air ?
'I bloom, blithesome Bessie,
To cheer your childish heart ;
The world is full of labor,
And this shall be my part.'
Whirl, busy wheel, faster,
Spin, little thread, spin ;
The sun shines fair without,
And we are gay within.

"O robin in the tree-top,
With sunshine on your breast,
Why brood you so patiently
Above your hidden nest ?
'I brood, blithesome Bessie,
And sing my humble song,
That the world may have more music
From my little ones erelong.'
Whirl, busy wheel, faster,
Spin, little thread, spin,
The sun shines fair without,
And we are gay within.

“O balmy wind of summer,
 O silver-singing brook,
 Why rustle through the branches?
 Why shimmer in your nook?
 I flutter, blithesome Bessie,
 Like a blessing far and wide;
 I scatter bloom and verdure
 Where'er my footsteps glide.
 Whirl, busy wheel, faster,
 Spin, little thread, spin,
 The sun shines fair without,
 And we are gay within.

“O brook and breeze and blossom,
 And robin on the tree,
 You make a joy of duty,
 A pride of industry;
 Teach me to work as blithely,
 With a willing hand and heart:
 The world is full of labor,
 And I must do my part.
 Whirl, busy wheel, faster,
 Spin, little thread, spin,
 The sun shines fair without,
 And we are gay within.”

“Yes,” sighed the elf, as she listened, “it is as Madam Mouse said,—there is no real pleasure in idleness. I will no longer think of selfish ease alone, but try to gather resolution from all I have suffered, and begin my task for love of dear mamma.”

So anxious was she to be gone, that, scarcely staying to thank the friendly child, Moss hurried away, fearing some fresh misfortune would befall her unless she fell to work at once. With many tears she owned her fault, asking to be made a diligent and happy elf. “Madam Mouse re-

ceived her kindly, and did not lecture her, for all she said was, "Now you are my good child again, and I am pleased with you."

"What shall I do first?" asked Moss, springing out of bed when the little mice called her next morning at dawn.

"Come and welcome the sun with me, for I bear him good-morrows from all in the field," said the lark, as she rose from her nest.

"Are you never tired of this long flight?" asked the elf, as they floated up through rosy clouds to the blue above.

"No, for I can never fly high enough, nor pour forth my happiness loud enough, I am so weak and small. But though I never reach the sun, I carry back with me blithe memories of things above here to gladden my whole day." And with a gush of unspeakable joy falling from her little throat, Lightheart soared far out of sight, then dropped into her nest, leaving musical echoes behind.

"Ah! that was fine! and I'll go again to-morrow," cried Moss. "What next, Mother Mouse?"

"Come to the river and bring up water for the day," said Nibble, always interested in the eating and drinking part of the housekeeping.

Away they all raced, eager to see which would fill their green pitcher first, for they used the leaves of a plant called Forefathers' Cup, and Mrs. Mouse had rows of them in her cool cellar, as we keep wine-casks in our own.

The more Moss did, the more she liked it, and all day long she worked like a busy ant, helping Skip store acorns, shaking down ripe grains from the wheat-ears for madam's

small harvesting, tripping over the field with Chirp to see the sick and poor ; for he was a minister, as all might see by his black coat and the charitable zeal with which he hurried to and fro, preaching a cheerful sermon as he worked. At night she went with Spin to spread his webs on the grass, that the dew might fall and the moon shine on them till they were bleached to a silvery whiteness, and thus made fit for fairy-cloth.

Thus working with each of her friends, little Moss soon learned many a useful thing, and for every trial and temptation found a solace in her fairy talisman. All in the field loved her and tried to make her happy ; for they saw how patiently she tried to do well, and how eagerly she longed to see her home again.

Mamma Mouse had many a gay feast in her pleasant rooms ; for when rain fell without, Flash the firefly and Glimmer the glowworm lent their light ; Skip came down to crack nuts and jokes, Spin told stories as endless as his webs, Chirp sang psalms as heartily as Martin Luther, whom he very much resembled, being lively, stout, and zealous, while Moss and the young mice played games and romped till their heads spun round.

So the summer days passed in the

“Books and work and healthful play”

manner which is best for all of us ; and when at length the face in the magic-mirror always smiled upon her, Moss knew her task was done, and joyfully waited her summons home.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Brier awoke from her long sleep, she looked with wondering eyes about her, for she was no longer in the fairy palace, but alone in a deep forest. Squirrels skipped from tree to tree, birds came fearlessly to bathe in the clear pool at her feet, wood-flowers nodded on their stems, and all the air was filled with the pleasant murmur of the pines. At first Brier only wondered how she came there, then she called her sisters loud and long ; and when nothing but a naughty echo mimicked her, she grew very angry and threw herself down weeping and fretting because she was sent away to live alone in the great wood.

As she lay sobbing, with her cheek against the grass, a soft voice said beside her : " Little Brier, do not weep so passionately ; you are not to stay alone, for the forest is full of friends who will gladly try to make it pleasant for you. Come with me ; I have a softer bed and little feast prepared for you above there."

Brier looked up to find a mild-eyed dove waving its white wings beside her, as it cooed these gentle words ; and, before the fairy could answer, came other little voices from the tree above her head, calling : " Come up ! come up, mamma ! and bring the wonderful elf. We cannot fly and we cannot wait ; come soon, else we shall fall out with trying to see."

With that Brier heard a flapping of wings, a rustling of leaves, and saw two small heads peering over the edge

of a nest, with eyes full of eager delight. Up flew the mother dove and up flew Brier to where little Flutter and Coo lay in their downy cradle, and the gentle papa sat by with a ripe berry in his bill to offer the guest.

"Here she is," said the dove. "You must try to make your home very happy to dear Brier, for she has left a far lovelier one to stay with us a little. Be very tender with her, that she may not grieve for her sisters, and may look back with pleasure on her visit here."

"O, that we will, mamma, if she will only be our little friend, and love us as we love her," cried the young doves, putting up their bills to kiss her; and hopping joyfully on their unsteady pink legs.

"Now, my darlings," said the mother, after they had supped and talked quite gayly for a while, "papa and I must go and see neighbor Linnet, for she is very ill, and we are afraid little Twitter may suffer for food. Therefore we will leave you to play together, and soon be back again."

The doves flew away, and presently their comfortable cooing sounded through the wood. Brier was her gentlest self now; so she told Flutter and Coo her merriest tales, taught them elfin games, and danced on a leaf before them till they quite stared with wonder. As the sun set they said, "Good night"; for these birds never fretted when bed-time came, never cried to have the lamp left, nor had any fear of goblins, but tucked their little heads under their wings and fell asleep without troubling mamma by a single pout. Brier often did all these naughty things, but she never told the doves so, only sat in the twilight on a bending bough, and sang them a fairy

ULLABY.

“Now the day is done,
Now the shepherd sun
Drives his white flocks from the sky ;
Now the flowers rest
On their mother’s breast,
Hushed by her low lullaby.

“Now the glowworms glance,
Now the fireflies dance,
Under fern-boughs green and high ;
And the western breeze
To the forest trees
Chants a tuneful lullaby.

“Now ’mid shadows deep
Falls blessed sleep,
Like dew from the summer sky ;
And the whole earth dreams,
In the moon’s soft beams,
While night breathes a lullaby.

“Now, birdlings, rest,
In your wind-rocked nest,
Unscared by the owl’s shrill cry ;
For with folded wings
Little Brier swings,
And singeth your lullaby.”

In this gentle family lived the elf, and for a time all went well, for those about her were so lovely in their manners, so unselfish, kind, and patient, she had no cause for anger, wilfulness, or discontent, but seemed to be a perfect fairy, and was much beloved by all in the wood. By and by she began to get tired of this quiet

life, to forget to look often at her bosom monitor, and cross feelings soon brought unkind words. The doves grieved over this and tried to help her, but the little fault was not easy to be cured, and nothing but trying very hard, very patiently on Brier's own part, could ever change it.

One day, when Papa Dove was gone to market in a distant barley-field, and Mamma was rocking Twitter Linnet to sleep, Flutter and Coo sat coseyly in the nest watching the dragon-flies play among the water-weeds below.

"Ah, if we could only fly, what merry games we would have down there! It seems as if I could not stay up here another day, I so long to see a little of the world, which looks so fine from this high place," sighed Flutter.

"Yes," answered Coo; "I, too, long to use my wings, for they seem large and strong enough. But mamma will not teach us yet, so we must wait till she thinks best. I hope it will be soon, for at night I dream of such far flights into the sky that I wake feeling as if I should spring out of the nest for joy."

"We shall not have to wait long, little sister," said Flutter, "for last night, when I woke to stretch my legs a bit, I heard papa say that, as soon as Neighbor Linnet was on the wing again, our flying lessons would begin; and that will be soon, I fancy, for she sat on a sunny twig a whole hour to-day."

"I can teach you to fly without waiting at all," said Brier, looking out from the leaf behind which she had gone to sulk. "Hop forth to the edge of the nest, spread your wings, give a small leap, and all will go well with you."

"Mamma bade us wait for her, and I am afraid some mischief will happen if we disobey," answered Coo, as Brier unfurled her shining wings and smiled again.

"Might we not try?" asked Flutter, eagerly. "I long so to sit on the moss by the pool, and peck a seed or a bug or two for myself. Let us just fly down, and surprise mamma by sitting all in a row on that pretty green mound. I think we might without harm."

"I dare not, because we promised. It is such a long, long way, and we might easily fall on the stones. Do not go, Flutter; do not tempt her, dear Brier. Just think, if she break a leg or a wing, how sad it will be!"

"I'm not afraid!" cried Flutter, hopping out of the nest. "Come hither, Brier, and show me how to use these fine wings of mine as gracefully as you do your own."

"See now, I spread them thus, lift up my feet, and float away like a thistle-down"; and away went Brier, high over the tree-tops, then down in airy circles, till she rippled with her little foot the surface of the pool.

"Yes, yes, that looks very charming, but is not so easy as one might suppose," said Flutter, skipping timidly up and down with much flapping of her half-grown wings. "I cannot lift this heavy body of mine, for I am a sadly fat bird, though I never knew it till now. Can you not help one a bit, dear Brier?"

"I shall not help you at all, if you do not obey me at once," answered the elf, with a frown. "You said you were not afraid, but I do not believe it; else you would soar boldly away, and not stand twittering and trembling here. Come and help me, Coo; if you fly first, she will

be ashamed not to follow, and then we will have gay times in the air."

"No, I cannot, and it is not kind of you to take poor Flutter away, for we cannot fly at once, as you fairies do. Come back, sister, and let us play safely here. O, do! it is so wrong to disobey mamma."

But Flutter and Brier would not listen to good little Coo, and still stayed out on the bough. The elf floated and flew, soared up and swooped down, but the timid bird could not gain courage to follow. Then Brier grew angry, and saying, "I shall wait no longer, fly away at once, you foolish thing!" she thrust her off the branch. Poor Flutter spread her feeble wings, but they could not uphold her, and, with a cry of affright, she fell heavily to the ground, and lay quite still, as if she were dead.

Coo, forgetting her fear, flew to the edge of the nest, and called her mother in a louder tone than had ever passed her little bill before, while Brier bent over the motionless dove, and tried to recall it to life. But the soft eyes were closed, the white bosom ruffled and bruised.

"Oh! what shall I do?" cried the terrified elf. "I never meant to hurt her like this, and how shall I make her better before the mamma comes back?"

"Go and hide yourself in the darkest nook of the wood, and never hope to be forgiven for a thing like this. Go away before her mother comes, for this sight will surely break her heart," chirped a wren, hastening down from her nest near by.

"Yes indeed, you had best fly away at once, for now not even a gnat will be friends with you, but all of us will fear you, for you are not what we thought you; so go away, and leave us in peace, naughty Brier!"

A dragon-fly spoke, and all about her, from pool and grass, and trees and air, echoed voices, calling, "Go away, go away, naughty Brier!"

"I will go away to my own lovely home, for I hate this gloomy forest, and I will never come among you again, unkind and uncivil creatures that you are!" cried Brier, forgetting everything in her passion; and, without another look at Flutter, another word to Coo, she darted away with a whirr like that of an angry humming-bird, when he finds no honey in a flower.

A long way flew Brier, till her wings were tired and her breath quite gone, she went so fast; then she paused in a lonely part of the wood, and sat down on a pebble to rest. She would not think yet, for she was still in a naughty mood, and when one begins to remember the unkind things one has done, one begins to get sorry for them, and longs to be forgiven. In order that she might forget the sad accident which she had caused, the elf hummed a song as she sat; but it sounded harsh and out of tune, because she was so herself; so she stopped singing, and amused herself by watching an ant village near by. Very busy were the inhabitants of Emmetville, running up and down the streets; some with loads of food, some with grains of sand from their underground houses, others doing errands which none but ants would have to do. Being a fairy, Brier could understand their language, and heard them singing and talking as they worked, and very funny were some of the songs and sayings. Close by her seat rose a neat little mound, and one most industrious ant was tugging away with load after load of sand from within; up he would come with a big grain, lay it nicely outside, take a breath of fresh air, and hurry back

again in such haste that he often tumbled head over heels down his little hole. Brier liked this busy one, for he sang as he worked, and had a very pleasant expression of countenance. As he paused to settle a large grain of yellow sand on the top of the mound, as an ornament to the front door, Brier said : "Mr. Emmet, why are you in such haste ? and why do you never stop to rest or talk with your neighbors ?"

The ant made her a little bow, and answered, gayly : "I am about to be married, and wish to get my house in fine order as soon as I can ; therefore I work with all my might, and sing meanwhile, for I am the happiest fellow in all the town, and shall have a grand wedding to-morrow. Ha ! ha ! Come and see us then, if you will."

With that he gave a little skip for joy, lost his footing, and rolled down the mound, laughing as he went, till he fell against a big black ant, who was walking by in a very stately manner. When the red ant came tumbling over his back, he grew dreadfully angry, and cried out in a rough voice : "What ! what ! is this the way you play tricks on respectable persons, you unmannerly mite ? Wait a bit, and see what comes of such pranks."

"Indeed, indeed, sir, it was only an accident, and upon my word it shall never happen again," began the red ant, very humbly, as he gathered himself up with a great many bows.

But the black ant was in such a towering rage he would not listen, nor understand, but fell upon poor little Mr. Emmet, and beat and bit and dragged him here and there most unmercifully. Brier besought him to let go, and all the ant people came running to see, but dared not help, because the black ant was far bigger and

stronger than they, and belonged to a very fierce tribe, which had destroyed their village more than once. So they ran away again as fast as they came ; and when the black fellow had vented his rage, he went on his way, leaving the Emmet quite dead on the ground. Brier was very much grieved and shocked at such a display of temper, and cried over the departed ant very tenderly, as she laid him in the little house he would never want any more. She set up the handsome yellow grain as a monument, and sent a message to the unhappy ant-bride, telling how it happened, for she could not go to see her,—no, that would be altogether too sad.

Then she sorrowfully went on her way, thinking of poor Flutter, wondering if she, too, were dead, and feeling as if she herself were no better than the brutal black ant who had destroyed so much happiness in his blind anger. Full of these dismal feelings, she flew aimlessly here and there till nightfall ; then, homesick, cold, and weary, she crept into a pine-tree, longing to be safe again between downy Flutter and Coo, with Mamma Dove's sheltering wings folded over her head. As she sat sighing and shivering in the gloomy tree, there arose a great noise below her, and, peeping down, she saw a badly built nest, full of young crowlets, all fighting for a bit of carion their father had just given them. Such shrill cawing and pecking and beating of wings Brier had never seen. Each crowlet wanted all, and none would stop to settle the matter amicably, but all fought and screamed till feathers flew, the nest rocked, and more than one eye was nearly pecked out. None succeeded in getting the morsel, for in the skirmish it fell to the ground and was lost. A crow near by flew down, gobbled it up, and gave them a scolding for being so silly.

All this frightened Brier so much, that when the crows fell to reproaching each other, and began a fresh quarrel, she flew away as if some fearful thing was after her, and never stopped till a wide marsh lay before her. It was quite dark now, and a heavy dew began to fall ; but the elf had nowhere to go, and sat weeping underneath a dilapidated mushroom, wondering what would become of her. Presently a brilliant light came dancing over the marsh, and a voice cried out : “ Come hither ! come hither ! I will show you a safe, warm place. Trust to me, and follow.”

Gladly Brier obeyed, and hastened after the friendly light, which flitted hither and thither, now gleaming brightly, now flickering like a dim candle in the wind. The tired fairy followed till her wings gave out, and she was forced to ask if they were not nearly at the journey’s end. Then the false light vanished with a mocking laugh, and Brier fluttered down upon the damp moss, where she lay faint with weariness and fear. The tempting Will-o’-the-wisp danced round her again, evil-eyed snakes looked out from their coverts, strange plants nodded in their sleep, noisome vapors filled the air, and hoarse-voiced frogs came hopping up to touch the shuddering elf with their clammy fingers, and bid her come and play with them among the green pools of the fen.

“ O go away, and leave me to die in peace ! ” cried Brier. “ Do not hurt me, for I am a lost, unhappy elf, who has no friend in the wide world to save her now.”

“ Do not fear, poor little creature ! for we will befriend you, though we are but small and weak,” whispered sweet voices from the moss. “ Lie here and rest till

morning ; nothing shall harm you, for we will guard your sleep, and send you happy dreams."

"Who are you ?" asked Brier, already soothed by the gentle tones and fragrant breath that surrounded her. "May I trust you ? I have been once deceived, and am very miserable."

"Yes, we know that, and we pity you ; now rest your weary little head in the shadow of our leaves, and tell us how we can best comfort you."

Brier felt the soft touch of some flowery sprite as a drop of honey came upon her lips, and her head was pillow'd on some gentle bosom. So friendly were the words, the acts, of these unknown beings, she was touched and won at once. Lying there, she presently began to weep repentant tears, and sobbed out : "Ah, the only comfort I can know is to be able to undo the naughty thing which I have done. Can you show me how I shall make the doves forgive and love me as they did ?"

"Dear little Brier, there is but one way to reach what you desire," whispered the sweet voices in her ear. "Go humbly back and ask to be forgiven ; then show that your penitence is sincere by keeping a careful guard upon tongue and temper. It needs but little knowledge to tell us that gentleness wins its way everywhere, and patience is the sweetest virtue which mortal, elf, or flower can possess."

"Do not listen to these weak and foolish words," cried other voices above Brier's head, while a bitter odor filled the air. "Look up and listen to us, for we will show a better way to be happy. Do not go back nor humble yourself to any one. Go on and look for pleas-

ure everywhere ; for life was not given to be wasted in uprooting harmless little passions such as yours. Heed our words, and ask no pardon of the silly doves, who will but despise you for your weak submission."

"It is a brave, a beautiful thing to say, 'Forgive me, I have done wrong ; I will amend,'" breathed the other voices from the moss. "O listen to us, and conquer the small passions while you may, lest they become your masters, and rule you like a slave. Go back, dear elf, and with a single word wipe out the bitterness of your regret, atone for the unkind deed, and let it be a lesson that shall serve you all your life."

Wondering and perplexed lay Brier, listening to the unseen spirits that warned and tempted her. First she thought to obey the selfish ones, and try to be good no longer, because it was so hard. But the unhappy hours she had spent, the sad sights she had seen, the fright, the weariness, and want she had suffered, showed her that happiness would not come without self-control. Next she bent to hearken to the gentler voices, and tender thoughts began to come, good resolutions sprung up, and meek desires seemed to comfort her as she received and welcomed them. Then for the first time did she see a faint light glimmering on the moss ; she thought it was a glowworm, and put out her tiny hands to warm them at his lamp ; but no worm, no firefly, nor even a stray moonbeam did she find. As she moved, the golden shadow followed, and soon she found that it was shining brightest on her own breast. It was the talisman, and as she drew it out, through all the gloom her mother's face smiled on her with the look that always softened little Brier's heart, and helped her to repent even in her

naughtiest hours. It did so then ; for, laying down her wet cheek on the dear face in the magic drop, she cried out, through her tears : "O dear mamma ! I will be good, I will be good ! Speak no more to me, bad spirits, for I must not listen ; and you, friendly voices, whisper your wise warnings in my ear, that I may do my duty, may be forgiven for my fault, and be again a gentle little Brier."

As the words left her lips, her heavy eyelids closed, a warm wind breathed across her lips like a good-night kiss, and through the clouds the moon shone out like a motherly face watching over the lonely elf all night long.

When she woke, her first thought was to see who the good and evil counsellors had been. A tall, flame-colored marsh-lily rang its bells about her ; its leaves stained with dark spots, its bitter breath filling all the air. Turning from the savage-looking flower, with its noisy jangle, she found beside her a cluster of white violets blooming freshly even in that unlovely spot, and lifting their meek faces to the light with an innocent serenity that rebuked her as no words of theirs had done. She kissed and thanked them gratefully, and flew away a wiser, better elf for that night in the dreary fen.

Flutter Dove lay on her bed of feathers in the shadow of the ferns, for every bird in the wood had helped to make it soft for her : even the baby-birds had plucked a billful of down from their breasts or a cherished feather from among the few their little tails possessed. The bruised wing was still folded, but the ruffled bosom was white and smooth as ever, and Flutter's eyes shone again as she cooed to Twitter Linnet who sat beside her, or

looked up to answer her sister, who stood on the bough above showering sweet names and merry songs upon her, for Coo could not come down to play with her. Mamma Dove tripped about on her rosy feet, bringing seeds, worms, or water from the pool where the Papa was making bubbles shine and ripples flow, while he bathed his wings and dipped his head quite out of sight.

Suddenly a weary little figure stood before them ; its robe was soiled and torn, its tiny feet bleeding, its face stained with tears, and very sad. At first they did not know it, till, kneeling beside Flutter, it said, very humbly : "It is I, bad, passionate Brier. I have learned a lesson, and will try most patiently to be all that you would have me. Will you forgive and take me back again ?"

Then Flutter waved her one wing for joy, and Coo nearly fell off the bough in her delight, the kind mother-bird folded the penitent elf beneath her wings, and the father came hurrying from the pool to bid her be assured that they forgave and loved her better than before.

"Now that is right beautiful ! But I fear I could not so soon have pardoned such a thing, and been so glad to welcome that Brier Rose back," said neighbor Wren to Glance the dragon-fly, as they watched the doves.

"Yes indeed, it would be a fine matter if all in the wood followed their generous example, and learned to be as charitable to the faults of others. I for one will say a friendly word to the elf, for I was very sharp with her when Flutter fell, and have been somewhat troubled at heart ever since."

As he spoke Glance darted away to bid his neighbors greet Brier without reproof or coldness, while Madam

Wren sent her daughter Jenny to see if she could be of use to Madam Dove. Cock Robin soon followed with the ripest berry he could find, and all in the forest were kind to the elf, for the sake of the doves who had suffered most, but forgave so readily.

Poor Brier had not thought to be so tenderly received, and it did her more good than a hundred scoldings. Every one was so kind, it almost broke her heart to remember all the ungentle things she had said and done to them ; and when Papa Dove had brought her new garments from Silverthread the spider, when mamma had bathed and bound up her wounded feet, and little Coo had gathered her cosily into the nest, she put her arms about her neck and fell asleep, resolving to be the very opposite of all she had been, till the past was quite forgotten and the good Star fully satisfied.

She kept her promise ; for, like many a child, she only needed to be shown how sad and unlovely her own fault looked in others, to grow glad and eager to be good. Often quick words rose to her lips and anger burned in her heart, for it takes many efforts, many failures, to make a real success ; but when the gust of passion had passed by, she asked pardon, and tried still harder to subdue her bosom sin. Whenever she found herself getting very bad, she thought of the dead ant, the quarrelsome crows, the night in the fen, and all the misery she had brought upon herself. That helped her, and with each day the face in the talisman shone clearer and smiled sweeter on the now gentle-tempered Brier.

CHAPTER IV.

BLUSH opened her eyes in a garden, and looked delightedly about her, thinking within herself, "I cannot fail to be happy in such a blooming place as this; I will choose the finest flower for my palace, and live here like a queen."

All through the garden she went, but was not satisfied till she came to the Crown-imperial. It had no perfume, but was dressed in scarlet and gold, and in each cup there lay a drop which was not dew, but a part of the flower, and these Blush made her mirrors. Here she lived and soon found friends among the tulips growing close by. Her days she spent in arranging gay garments, looking in her glasses, and flying about to be admired by the flowers, many of whom flattered the vain elf, that she might stay with them, for fairies are dearly beloved by flowers. The wiser blossoms warned her of her folly in thus wasting her life, and none pitied her more sincerely than Mignonette, who lived in a sunny corner among the pansies and blue larkspurs. She often ventured to remind Blush that time was going and nothing had been done; but the elf only looked scornfully down on the sad-colored plant, bade her take care of herself, and floated away to the tulips, who clad her in purple and gold.

One morning a busy breeze came through the garden, proclaiming that a messenger from Fairyland was on his way, and bidding them prepare to greet him. Then

every flower spread her colored leaves, opened her cells, and put on her dew-drop ornaments, till each glittered in the sun. Soon they saw the Honey-king approaching, for he had been to Elf-land with his tribute of sweets to the Queen, and brought her message back.

"See!" cried the Rose, "see his velvet cloak, the golden bands on his breast, the gleam of his wings, and hear his deep voice as he sings on his way. Ah, if he would but come to me, I should be the happiest flower that ever bloomed."

On came the royal bee humming as he flew, and each flower trembled with expectation as they watched and waited. He hovered above the rose a moment, but Mignonette's breath was sweeter than hers. Away to the sad-colored blossom he flew, and, standing beside her, delivered his message.

"I am bidden to tell you that the elves are coming to choose one among you to be the summer queen; and when autumn comes, and they return to lay you in your winter beds, if she has ruled wisely and well, they will bear her away to bloom in Fairyland forever."

When the flowers heard this, great were the rejoicings, for this was the highest honor that could be done them, and each hoped to gain it. The sun shone and the dew fell alike on all, and they who used these good gifts aright grew daily in strength and beauty. Now Blush had nothing to do with the matter, and should have helped the flowers instead of thinking only of herself. But she was so vain she hoped to be chosen the queen, both because of her beauty and her birth, and all day long she flew busily here and there, preparing the finest

suit, that she might outshine all about her. This was not kind, and the plants disliked her more and more, for she took away their dew to bathe in, broke off their fairest leaves for her robes, powdered her hair with their golden pollen, and gave them no peace for their own affairs.

"Can you not tell me how I may wash away all traces of the sun from my face? It is not as fair as it used to be, and will soon be as brown as ugly Minnie's, if I cannot freshen its bloom."

She spoke to the tulips, who had ceased to be her friends when they found she was trying to outdo them in splendor; but they hid their dislike under smiling faces, and replied: "Down by the wall yonder grows a plant with violet flowers; go and bathe in their dew, pretty Blush, and see how fair you'll become."

If Blush had studied fairy lore instead of her own lovely face, she would have known that the violet flowers grew on the deadly nightshade, which would only blight and destroy. But she knew nothing of it, and, hastening away, bathed in the poisonous dew, then flew home, and to sleep, that she might be fresh for the morrow.

With the first peep of day Blush was before her mirror, to see if the change had been wrought. But she started with dismay, for a colorless face, with dim eyes, white lips, and faded hair, looked back at her. She thought the morning mist had blurred her glass, and tried another, but in each it was the same, and then she saw the cruel loss which had befallen her. Full of grief and indignation, she flew to reproach the tulips, but they answered, scornfully: "Foolish thing! when we told you to bathe in the flowers yonder, we meant the purple jessamine, not

the evil nightshade. We thought an elf who gave herself such airs knew everything, and think you justly punished for your vanity. Now that you are not fit to be seen, you had better hide yourself till the elves are gone," — and the cruel tulips turned laughing away.

Poor little Blush knew they spoke falsely, and went sadly away to hide herself behind a burdock-leaf that grew near the fountain in a lonely corner, for she wished to see, yet not be seen.

With the first rays of the sun came the fairy troop, some on rosy clouds, some on the morning wind, some on their own fleet wings. Each flower heart beat fast as the shining band alighted and passed along the blooming terraces. On it went by the stately Lily, who grew pale with grief when she saw that the wands were not lowered before her, and with an imploring voice she cried : "Are not my leaves stainless as snow ? Am I not stately and fair ? Why am I not chosen queen ?"

But the elves replied, as they pointed to a cluster of heart's-ease, dying for want of sun and air in the shadow of Lily's broad leaves : "In your white bosom lies a haughty heart, careless of all things but itself. We cannot crown you till you have learned the beauty of humility."

Blushing with anger, the Rose demanded, as they passed her by : "Do you not see me ? Am I not the queen of flowers, royal and sweet ? Give me the crown : it is my right."

But soft hands put the thorny branches back, and the elfin voices whispered : "Passion makes no flower fair, however royal be its birth. Rule yourself, wilful Rose, then you may wisely govern others."

Now when neither of the rival beauties were chosen, no other plant dared speak, but waited in wondering silence while the elves passed all the flowers that possessed a single charm, until they reached the nook where Mignonette was rocking a baby butterfly to sleep upon her breast. Here every wand fell, and amid an astonished hush the fairies proclaimed *her* the summer queen.

Now when Blush saw this she could not bear it ; the thought that the ugly brown flower, whom she had despised, was to reign over all the garden, to have a court, ministers, and maids of honor, to be visited by ambassadors from other courts, to receive gifts, and in the autumn to be carried in state to Fairyland, was too much for the disappointed elf, because with vanity comes envy, and she could not endure that any one should be more praised or honored than herself. As all the fairy harps began to tinkle, the flower-bells to ring, and the coronation festival opened with great splendor, Blush cried out : "I will not stay to see this ; if I cannot be lovely, I will die and be forgotten" ; and, flying up to the fountain's brim, she plunged deep into the cold, dark water dashing there. She hoped to die at once, for fairies do not receive their magic wands till they are grown, and many things have power to hurt them before that time. But to her great surprise, the waves divided without harming or even wetting her a drop, and she sank safely to the bottom, where lived a solitary water-sprite, who looked much amazed when the elf came floating into her blue chamber, as she sat in a shell singing the song the fountain repeated to the flowers above.

The sprite was very kind to Blush, and glad to have

a friend, for she was very lonely ; and they fell to talking quite as if they had known one another a long time.

"I cannot understand why I was not drowned in coming hither," said the elf, when she had told her troubles.

"You must have some fairy charm about you, and that made the water harmless," answered the sprite.

Then Blush remembered her talisman, and looked at it, longing to feel her mother's arms about her, and hear her gentle voice comforting her sorrow. Like Moss and Brier, she had forgotten to look often at it and be guided by its smiles or tears. Now it was a most consoling thought, that, though she was so plain, her mother would still love her, still wait and hope to see her, and have no reproach for her if she were only good. Now it seemed time to begin her task, and, having no beauty to fill her little head with vain fancies, her heart woke up from its long sleep and bade her live for better things.

"Kind sprite, can you help me to be humble, generous, and truly useful ? I desire to do well, but I have spent my days in foolish play, and now I cannot tell how it is best to cure my vanity," she said, with tears in her dim eyes.

"Live for others, Blush ; forget yourself, and care for the beauty of a simple, earnest heart more than for loveliness of face or grace of form. Nothing can change or take this charm away ; and I will help you to obtain it, if you really care for it."

"I do, I do ; try me, and see if I am not sincere."

The sprite believed her, and till twilight fell amused the elf in her own charming manner, — teaching her to

understand the liquid music of the waves, the strange language of the fishes, that glided to and fro above them like golden birds in a blue sky ; telling her sweet stories of a water-spirit's life in river, lake, and sea ; rocking her in a rosy shell ; feeding her on delicate food ; and leading her up and down the weedy bottom of the marble basin, where little red crabs, water-spiders, sea-anemones, and odd shell-fish enjoyed themselves among the pebbles and coral branches lying here and there.

So busy was Blush that she *did* forget herself, for the first time in many days, — forgot her loss, her unhappiness, and began to smile again ; for though the sprite was a curious creature, with long, green hair, and little fins upon her shoulders where the elf had wings, — though she wore no clothes, and her tiny hands were damp and cold, — she had such friendly ways with her, such loving eyes, and a voice so like the ripple of quiet waves upon the shore, that Blush grew very fond of her.

When the stars came out in the evening sky, and all the dwellers in the fountain crept into their watery beds, the sprite wrapped herself in a cloak of mist, and bade Blush come with her. Up they went, and with delight the elf breathed long breaths of the balmy upper air, and warmed herself in the golden heart of a rose, where the noonday heat still lingered.

“ Now,” said the sprite, “ you shall see my work, and bear a share in it. Take a part of my dew-mantle about you, and fly to every flower in this long bed, brush away the dust of day, and bathe it in the drops that will continually gather on the edge of your cloak. Forget none, but refresh all, and, if any have received a hurt, touch it

with this balm of moonlight, which is a sovereign cure for such wounds. I shall work on the upper terrace until dawn ; but if you tire of this labor, you can leave it, only I can never befriend you any more, unless you are in earnest." And with that, the sprite floated away.

This was a hard task for Blush, because she knew that the care given to the plants made them grow fair and strong, and now it seemed as if she were giving her own loveliness away ; besides, she was sure that sleepless nights, and days spent in the damp fountain, would not give her back her beauty. Long she stood with the dew-mantle in her hand, unable to decide, and at length stooped to lay it down, when from her bosom dropped the talisman, and lay shining on the grass. The face was so sorrowful, that, with a last sigh of selfish vanity, she folded herself in the chilly cloak, and saw, as she put it back into her bosom, that the mother's face was smiling on her now.

Then she fell to work, and washed every flower in the plot, though it must be owned that she scrubbed the naughty tulips till their cheeks glowed like fire, and they cried out. She could not forgive and love them yet, and as they did not know her in her misty cloak, she enjoyed that part of her work, and left such a big dew-drop in each cup, they thought there must have been a shower while they slept. Queen Minnie was more gently tended, for every leaf glistened, and the air was full of fragrance when the elf had done. Now that she had begun to care for others, she remembered the good counsel Mignonette had often given, and how scornfully she had received it ; therefore she was anxious to atone for her unkindness,

and did her careful work unseen in the stillness of the night.

Till dawn they worked, then back into the fountain for another quiet day, for the water-sprite could not bear the sun, and Blush would not leave her new-found friend. In this way a long time passed ; Blush never looked into a mirror, tried heartily to forget that she had been so fair, endeavored to be self-denying, humble, and happy in the unseen work to which she gave her nights. Soon she found she could rejoice in the beauty of others without an envious feeling, and tended many a plant that once had been unkind to her so tenderly, that they wondered at her forgiving spirit, and longed to see her as she once had been. Night after night, when she came stealing to them, thinking them asleep, some one of them would be awake, and waiting for her with a drop of freshest honey, a breath of odor, or a loving kiss, to show their friendliness, and Blush would dance for joy, saying, as she went on with her dainty task :—

“ Ah, this is better than to be a vain and selfish elf, unloved by any ! I can be glad that I am ugly, if pity makes me friends like these. What more can I do for you, dear flower ? Let me bend this leaf, that the sun may not scorch you to-morrow ; let me smooth away this fold in your petal, and be sure I will bring dew enough next time to bathe you from your tallest stamen to your lowest leaf.”

While busied with these generous cares for others, Blush was unconscious that her beauty was returning, that the sprite, the waves, the winds, the plants, all lent their help to give her back the charms she had lost four-fold greater than before. Now the loveliness came from

within, brightening her face until it seemed a little sun, shining even in the darksome fountain. No one told her this, till the sprite could not keep the secret any longer, and bade Blush look into the mirrors of the crown imperial, where they had been busied late into the dawn. The elf believed she should behold the faded face she had last seen there, but smiled and looked bravely in, there to behold a sweeter face than any glass ever had reflected before. She knew it was her own, was glad to be again her winsome self, but now the vanity was so well cured, that, instead of looking proudly about her, she spread her hands before her face, and would not lift it up until the sprite placed her on the green tuft of leaves that crowned the flower, and set all the scarlet bells to ringing, that the other plants might wake and rejoice with Blush. Very soon the garden was alive with blooming faces and gay voices, as birds and blossoms joined in the song the happy fairy sang, while the sun climbed up the rosy sky, and on her bosom shone the talisman, undarkened by a single shadow.

“O lesson well and wisely taught,
Stay with me to the last,
That all my life may better be
For the trial that is past.
O vanity, mislead no more !
Sleep, little passions, long !
Wake, happy heart, and dance again
To the music of my song !

“O summer days, flit fast away,
And bring the blithesome hour
When we three wanderers shall meet
Safe in our household flower !

O dear mamma, lament no more !
Smile on us as we come,
Your grief has been our punishment,
Your love has led us home."

Mamma Rose sat alone longing for the merry voices that used to make the evening hour such a pleasant time. The Papa was teaching Tina to fly among the aspen-trees near by, and as the Mamma watched the only child now left her, tears dropped slowly down her cheeks, and she sighed : "When will they come ? Ah, if they knew how I pine for them, they would not linger long away from me."

As the words left her lips there came a little rustle, and there before her, as if they had risen at her wish, stood Blush, Brier, and Moss, with a star shining on each forehead, while smiles and tears made rainbows on their happy faces. Gathered close to their mother's bosom, they were too full of joy for words, till the dear Papa came flying like the wind with Tina, whose locks were all blown about her face, and little garments sadly ruffled with his speed. But when she saw who waited for her, she fluttered from one to the other, eager to welcome them back, and show that she could fly as well as they. Then, lying in their mother's arms, they told all their wanderings, and the hope each cherished that the good Star's lessons had been so well learned that they could never be forgotten.

"But tell me, dearest children, what was the talisman Star gave to help and comfort you ? I long to see the wondrous charm which has given me back my darlings so beautiful and good," said Mamma Rose, as she kissed the blooming faces clustering about her own.

Blush, Brier, and Moss drew closer still ; and, folding their arms more tenderly about her, whispered, as they showed the magic drops glittering in their little bosoms : “ See, dear mamma, here lies the talisman ; for the strong, sweet spell that conquered passion, vanity, and indolence, and led us safely home, was our great love for you.”



SHADOW-CHILDREN.

NED, Polly, and Will sat on the steps one sunshiny morning, doing nothing, except wish they had something pleasant to do.

“Something new, something never heard of before, — wouldn’t that be jolly?” said Ned, with a great yawn.

“It must be an amusing play, and one that we don’t get tired of very soon,” added Polly gravely.

“And something that didn’t be wrong, else mamma wouldn’t like it,” said little Will, who was very good for a small boy.

As no one could suggest any thing to suit, they all sat silent a few minutes. Suddenly Ned said, rather crossly, “I wish my shadow wouldn’t mock me. Every time I stretch or gape it does the same, and I don’t like it.”

“Poor thing, it can’t help that: it has to do just what you do, and be your slave all day. I’m glad I ain’t a shadow,” said Polly.

“I try to run away from mine sometimes, but I can’t ever. It will come after me ; and in the night it scares me, if it gets big and black,” said Will, looking behind him.

“Wouldn’t it be fun to see shadows going about alone, and doing things like people?” asked Polly.

“I just wish they would. I’d like to see ours cut

capers ; that would be a jolly new game, wouldn't it ? " said Ned.

No one had time to speak ; for suddenly the three little shadows on the sunny wall behind them stood up straight, and began to bow.

" Mercy, me ! " cried Polly, staring at them.

" By Jove, that's odd ! " said Ned, looking queer.

" Are they alive ? " asked Will, a little frightened.

" Don't be alarmed : they won't hurt you," said a soft voice. " To-day is midsummer-day, and whoever wishes a wish can have it till midnight. You want to see your shadows by themselves ; and you can, if you promise to follow them as they have followed you so long. They will not get you into harm ; so you may safely try it, if you like. Do you agree for the day to do as they do, and so have your wish ? "

" Yes, we promise," answered the children.

" Tell no one till night, and be faithful shadows to the shadows."

The voice was silent, but with more funny little bows the shadows began to move off in different directions. The children each knew their own : for Ned's was the tallest, and had its hands in its pockets ; Polly's had a frock on, and two bows where its hair was tied up ; while Will's was a plump little shadow in a blouse, with a curly head and a pug nose. Each child went after its shadow, laughing, and enjoying the fun.

Ned's master went straight to the shed, took down a basket, and marched away to the garden, where it began to move its hands as if busily picking peas. Ned stopped laughing when he saw that, and looked rather ashamed ; for he remembered that his mother had asked him to do that little job for her, and he had answered, —

"Oh, bother the old peas ! I'm busy, and I can't."

"Who told you about this?" he asked, beginning to work.

The shadow shook its head, and pointed first to Ned's new jacket, then to a set of nice garden tools near by, and then seemed to blow a kiss from its shadowy fingers towards mamma, who was just passing the open gate.

"Oh ! you mean that she does lots for me ; so I ought to do what I can for her, and love her dearly," said Ned, getting a pleasanter face every minute.

The shadow nodded, and worked away as busily as the bees, tumbling heels over head in the great yellow squash blossoms, and getting as dusty as little millers. Somehow Ned rather liked the work, with such an odd comrade near by ; for, though the shadow didn't really help a bit, it seemed to try, and set an excellent example. When the basket was full, the shadow took one handle, and Ned the other ; and they carried it in.

"Thank you, dear. I was afraid we should have to give up our peas to-day : I'm so busy, I can't stop," said mamma, looking surprised and pleased.

Ned couldn't stop to talk ; for the shadow ran away to the woodpile, and began to chop with all its might.

"Well, I suppose I must ; but I never saw such a fellow for work as this shadow is. He isn't a bit like me, though he's been with me so long," said Ned, swinging the real hatchet in time with the shadowy one.

Polly's new mistress went to the dining-room, and fell to washing up the breakfast cups. Polly hated that work, and sulkily began to rattle the spoons and knock the things about. But the shadow wouldn't allow that ; and Polly had to do just what it did, though she grumbled all the while.

"She don't splash a bit, or make any clatter ; so I guess she's a tidy creature," said Polly. "How long she does rub each spoon and glass ! We never shall get done. What a fuss she makes with the napkins, laying them all even in the drawer ! and now she's at the salt-cellars, doing them just as mamma likes. I wish she'd live here, and do my work for me. Why, what's that ?" And Polly stopped fretting to listen ; for she seemed to hear the sound of singing,—so sweet, and yet so very faint she could catch no words, and only make out a cheerful little tune.

"Do you hear any one singing, mamma ?" she asked.

"No : I wish I did." And mamma sighed ; for baby was poorly, and piles of sewing lay waiting for her, and Biddy was turning things topsy-turvy in the kitchen for want of a word from the mistress, and Polly was looking sullen.

The little girl didn't say any more, but worked quietly and watched the shadow, feeling sure the faint song came from it. Presently she began to hum the tune she caught by snatches ; and, before she knew it, she was singing away like a blackbird. Baby stopped crying, and mamma said, smiling, —

"Now I hear somebody singing, and it's the music I like best in the world."

That pleased Polly ; but, a minute after, she stopped smiling, for the shadow went and took baby, or seemed to, and Polly really did. Now, baby was heavy, and cross with its teeth ; and Polly didn't feel like tending it one bit. Mamma hurried away to the kitchen ; and Polly walked up and down the room with poor baby hanging over her arm, crying dismally, with a pin in its back, a wet bib under its chin, and nothing cold and hard to

bite with its hot, aching gums, where the little teeth were trying to come through.

"Do stop, you naughty, fretty baby. I'm tired of your screaming, and it's high time you went to sleep. Bless me! what's Miss Shadow doing with *her* baby?" said Polly.

Miss Shadow took out the big pin and laid it away, put on a dry bib, and gave *her* baby a nice ivory ring to bite ; then began to dance up and down the room, till the shadowy baby clapped its hands and kicked delightedly. Polly laughed, and did the same, feeling sorry she had been so pettish. Presently both babies grew quiet, went to sleep, and were laid in the cradle.

"Now, I hope we shall rest a little," said Polly, stretching her arms.

But, no : down sat the shadow, and began to sew, making her needle fly like a real little seamstress.

"Oh, dear!" groaned Polly. "I promised to hem those handkerchiefs for Ned, and so I must ; but I do think handkerchiefs are the most pokey things in the world to sew. I dare say you think you can sew faster than I can. Just wait a bit, and see what I can do, miss," she said to the shadow.

It took some time to find her thimble and needles and spools, for Polly wasn't a very neat little girl ; but she got settled at last, and stitched away as if bent on beating her dumb friend.

Little Will's shadow went up to the nursery, and stopped before a basin of water. "Oh! ah! ain't this drefful?" cried Will, with a shiver ; for he knew he'd got to have his face washed, because he wouldn't have it done properly when he got up, but ran away. Now, Will was a good child ; but this one thing was his great

trouble, and sometimes he couldn't bear it. Jane was so rough. She let soap get in his eyes, and water run down his neck, and she pinched his nose when she wiped him, and brushed his hair so hard that really it *was* dreadful ; and even a bigger boy would have found it hard to bear. He shivered and sighed : but Jane came in ; and, when he saw that the shadow stood still and took the scrubbing like a little hero, he tried to do the same, and succeeded so well that Jane actually patted his head and called him "a deary ;" which was something new, for old Nurse Jane was always very busy and rather cross.

Feeling that nothing worse could possibly happen to him, Will ran after his shadow, as it flitted away into the barn, and began to feed the chickens.

"There, now ! I forgotted all about my chickeys, and the shadow 'membered 'em ; and I'm glad of it," said Will, scattering dabs of meal and water to the chirping, downy little creatures who pecked and fluttered at his feet. Little Shadow hunted for eggs, drove the turkeys out of the garden, and picked a basket of chips : then it went to play with Sammy, a neighbor's child ; for, being a small shadow, it hadn't many jobs to do, and plenty of active play was good for it.

Sammy was a rough little boy and rather selfish : so, when they played ball, he wanted to throw all the time ; and, when Will objected, he grew angry and struck him. The blow didn't hurt Will's cheek much, but it did his little feelings ; and he lifted his hand to strike back, when he saw his shadow go and kiss Sammy's shadow. All his anger was gone in a minute, and he just put his arm round Sammy's neck and kissed him. This kiss for a blow made him so ashamed that he began to cry, and

couldn't be comforted till he had given Will his best marble and a ride on his pony.

About an hour before dinner, the three shadows and the children met in the garden, and had a grand game of play, after they had told each other what they had been doing since they parted. Now, the shadows didn't forget baby even then, but got out the wagon, and Miss Baby, all fresh from her nap, sat among her pillows like a queen, while Ned was horse, Polly footman, and Will driver ; and in this way she travelled all round the garden and barn, up the lane and down to the brook, where she was much delighted with the water sparkling along and the fine splash of the stones they threw in.

When the dinner-bell rang, mamma saw four clean, rosy faces and four smooth heads at the table ; for the shadow-children made themselves neat, without being told. Every one was merry and hungry and good-natured. Even poor baby forgot her teeth, and played a regular rub-a-dub with her spoon on her mug, and tried to tell about the fine things she saw on her drive. The children said nothing about the new play, and no one observed the queer actions of their shadows but themselves. They saw that there was no gobbling, or stretching over, or spilling of things, among the shadows ; but that they waited to be helped, served others first, and ate tidily, which was a great improvement upon the usual state of things.

It was Saturday afternoon : the day was fine, and mamma told them they could go for a holiday frolic in the woods. "Don't go to the pond, and be home early," she said.

"Yes, mamma ; we'll remember," they answered, as they scampered away to get ready.

"We shall go through the village, and Mary King will be looking out ; so I shall wear my best hat. Mamma won't see me, if I slip down the back way ; and I do so want Mary to know that my hat is prettier than hers," said Polly, up in her little room.

Now Polly was rather vain, and liked to prink ; so she got out the new hat, and spent some time in smoothing her braids and putting on her blue ribbons. But when all was ready, and the boys getting impatient, she found her shadow, with a sun-bonnet on, standing by the door, as if to prevent her going out.

"You tiresome thing ! do you mean that I mustn't wear my hat, but that old bonnet ?" asked Polly.

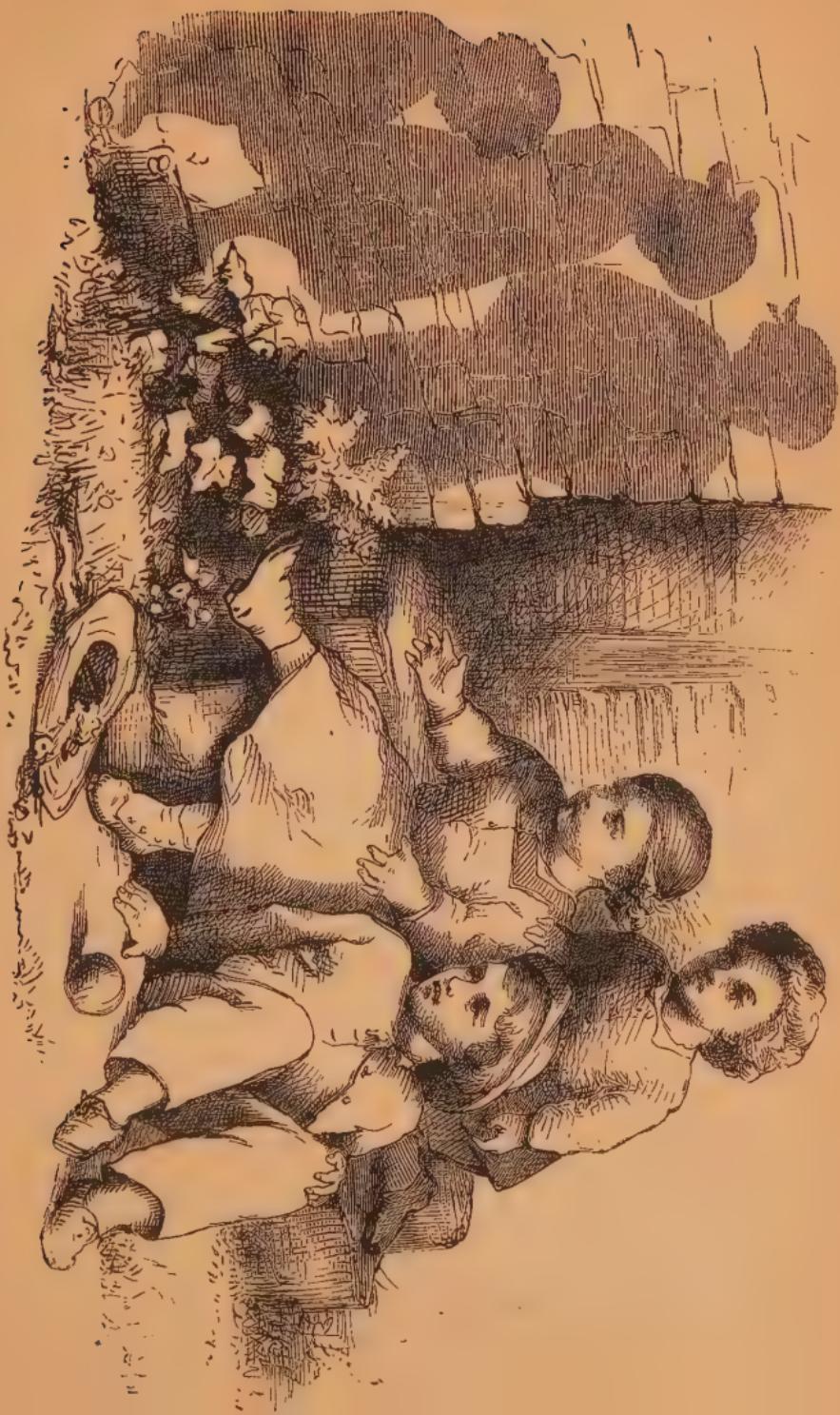
The shadow nodded and beckoned, and patted its head, as if it was all right.

"I wish I hadn't promised to do as you do ; then I could do as I like, and not make a fright of myself," said Polly, rather sulkily, as she put away the hat, and tied on the old bonnet with a jerk.

Once out in the lovely sunshine, she soon forgot the little disappointment ; and, as they didn't go through the village, but by a green lane, where she found some big blackberries, she was quite contented. Polly had a basket to hold fruit or flowers, Ned his jackknife, and Will a long stick on which he rode, fancying that this sort of horse would help his short legs along ; so they picked, whittled, and trotted their way to the wood, finding all manner of interesting things on the road.

The wood was full of pleasant sights and sounds ; for wild roses bloomed all along the path, ferns and scarlet berries filled the little dells, squirrels chattered, birds sang, and pines whispered musically overhead.

"I'm going to stop here and rest, and make a wreath



SHADOW CHILDREN.

of these pretty wild roses for baby: it's her birthday, and it will please mamma," said Polly, sitting down on a mound of moss, with a lapful of flowers.

"I'm going to cut a fishing-pole, and will be back in a minute." And Ned went crashing into the thickest part of the wood.

"I shall see where that rabbit went to, and maybe I'll find some berries," said Will, trotting down the path the wild rabbit had gone.

The sound of the boys' steps died away, and Polly was wondering how it would seem to live all alone in the wood, when a little girl came trudging by, with a great pail of berries on her arm. She was a poor child: her feet were bare, her gown was ragged, she wore an old shawl over her head, and walked as if lame. Polly sat behind the ferns, and the child did not see her till Polly called out. The sudden sound startled her; and she dropped her pail, spilling the berries all over the path. The little girl began to cry, and Polly to laugh, saying, in a scornful tone, —

"How silly to cry for a few berries!"

"I've been all day picking 'em," said the girl; "and I'm so tired and hungry; 'cause I didn't dare to go home till my pail was full,—mother scolds if I do,—and now they're all spoilt. Oh, dear! dear me!" And she cried so hard that great tears fell on the moss.

Polly was sorry now, and sat looking at her till she saw her shadow down on its knees, picking up the berries; then it seemed to fold its little handkerchief round the girl's bruised foot, and give her something from its pocket. Polly jumped up and imitated the kind shadow, even to giving the great piece of gingerbread she had brought for fear she should be hungry.

"Take this," she said gently. "I'm sorry I frightened you. Here are the berries all picked up, and none the worse for falling in the grass. If you'll take them to the white house on the hill, my mamma will buy them, and then your mother won't scold you."

"Oh, thank you, miss! It's ever so good. I'll take the berries to your mother, and bring her more whenever she likes," said the child gratefully, as she walked away munching the gingerbread, and smiling till there were little rainbows in her tears.

Meanwhile Ned had poked about in the bushes, looking for a good pole. Presently he saw a willow down by the pond, and thought that would give him a nice, smooth pole. He forgot his promise, and down he went to the pond; where he cut his stick, and was whittling the end, when he saw a boat by the shore. It was untied, and oars lay in it, as if waiting for some one to come and row out.

"I'll just take a little pull across, and get those cardinal-flowers for Polly," he said; and went to the boat.

He got in, and was about to push off, when he saw his shadow standing on the shore.

"Don't be a fool; get in, and come along," he said to it, remembering his promise now, but deciding to break it, and ask pardon afterwards.

But the shadow shook its head; pointed to the swift stream that ran between the banks, the rocks and mud on the opposite side, and the leaky boat itself.

"I ain't afraid: mamma won't mind, if I tell her I'm sorry; and it will be such fun to row alone. Be a good fellow, and let me go," said Ned, beckoning.

But the shadow would not stir, and Ned was obliged to mind. He did so very reluctantly, and scolded the

shadow well as he went back to Polly ; though all the time he felt he was doing right, and knew he should be glad afterwards.

Will trotted after the rabbit, but didn't find it ; he found a bird's-nest instead with four little birds in it. He had an empty cage at home, and longed for something to put in it ; for kittens didn't like it, and caterpillars and beetlebugs got away. He chose the biggest bird, and, holding him carefully, walked away to find Polly. The poor mother-bird chirped and fluttered in great distress ; but Will kept on till his little shadow came before him, and tried to make him turn back.

"No, no, I want him," said Will. "I won't hurt him, and his mother has three left : she won't mind if I take one."

Here the mother-bird chirped so loud it was impossible to help seeing that she *did* care very much ; and the shadow stamped its foot and waved its hand, as if ordering the young robber to carry back the baby-bird. Will stood still, and thought a minute ; but his little heart was a very kind one, and he soon turned about, saying pleasantly,—

"Yes, it *is* naughty, and I won't do it. I'll ask mamma to get me a canary, and will let this birdie stay with his brothers."

The shadow patted him on the shoulder, and seemed to be delighted as Will put the bird in the nest and walked on, feeling much happier than if he had kept it. A bush of purple berries grew by the path, and Will stopped to pick some. He didn't know what they were, and mamma had often told him never to eat strange things. But they smelt so good, and looked so nice, he couldn't resist, and lifted one to his mouth, when little shadow motioned for him to stop.

"Oh, dear! you don't let me do any thing I want to," sighed Will. "I shall ask Polly if I tarn't eat these ; and, if she says I may, I shall, so now."

He ran off to ask Polly ; but she said they were poisonous, and begged him to throw them away.

"Good little shadow, to keep me safe!" cried Will. "I like you ; and I'll mind better next time, 'cause you are always right."

The shadow seemed to like this, and bobbed about so comically it made Will laugh till his eyes were full of tears. Ned came back, and they went on, having grand times in the wood. They found plenty of berries to fill the basket ; they swung down on slender birches, and got rolls of white bark for canoes ; they saw all sorts of wild-wood insects and birds ; and frolicked till they were tired. As they crossed a field, a cow suddenly put down her head and ran at them, as if she was afraid they meant to hurt her calf. All turned, and ran as fast as they could toward the wall ; but poor Will in his fright tumbled down, and lay screaming. Ned and Polly had reached the wall, and, looking back, saw that their shadows had not followed. Ned's stood before Will, brandishing his pole ; and Polly's was flapping a shadowy sun-bonnet with all its might. As soon as they saw that, back they went,—Ned to threaten till he broke his pole, and Polly to flap till the strings came off. As if anxious to do its part, the bonnet flew up in the air, and coming down lit on the cross cow's head ; which so astonished her that she ran away as hard as she could pelt.

"Wasn't that funny?" said Will, when they had tumbled over the wall, and lay laughing in the grass on the safe side.

"I'm glad I wore the old bonnet ; for I suppose, my

best hat would have gone just the same," said Polly thankfully.

"The calf don't know its own mother with that thing on," laughed Ned.

"How brave and kind you were to come back and save me! I'd have been deaded if you hadn't," said Will, looking at his brother and sister with his little face full of grateful admiration.

They turned towards home after this flurry, feeling quite like heroes. When they came to the corner where two roads met, Ned proposed they should take the river-road; for, though the longest, it was much the pleasantest.

"We shan't be home at supper-time," said Polly. "You won't be able to do your jobs, Ned, nor I mine, and Will's chickens will have to go to bed hungry."

"Never mind: it's a holiday, so let's enjoy it, and no bother," answered Ned.

"We promised mamma we'd come home early," said Will.

They stood looking at the two roads,—one sandy, hot, and hilly; the other green and cool and level, along the river-side. They all chose the pleasant path, and walked on till Ned cried out, "Why, where are our shadows?"

They looked behind, before, and on either side; but nowhere could they see them.

"They were with us at the corner," said Will.

"Let's run back, and try to find them," said Polly.

"No, let 'em go: I'm tired of minding mine, and don't care if I never see it again," said Ned.

"Don't say so; for I remember hearing about a man who sold his shadow, and then got into lots of trouble because he had none. We promised to follow them, and we must," said Polly.

"I wish," began Ned in a pet ; but Polly clapped her hand over his mouth, saying,—

"Pray, don't wish now ; for it may come to pass as the man's wish in the fairy tale did, and the black pudding flew up and stuck tight to his wife's nose."

This made Ned laugh, and they all turned back to the corner. Looking up the hilly road, they saw the three shadows trudging along, as if bent on getting home in good time. Without saying a word, the children followed; and, when they got to the garden-gate, they all said at once,—

"Aren't you glad you came?"

Under the elm-tree stood a pretty tea-table, covered with bread and butter, custards, and berries, and in the middle a fine cake with sugar-roses on the top ; and mamma and baby, all nicely dressed, were waiting to welcome them to the birth-day feast. Polly crowned the little queen, Ned gave her a willow whistle he had made, and Will some pretty, bright pebbles he had found; and Miss Baby was as happy as a bird, with her treasures.

A pleasant supper-time ; then the small duties for each one ; and then the go-to-bed frolic. The nursery was a big room, and in the evening a bright wood-fire always burned there for baby. Mamma sat before it softly, rubbing baby's little rosy limbs before she went to bed, singing and telling stories meanwhile to the three children who pranced about in their long nightgowns. This evening they had a gay time ; for the shadows amused them by all sorts of antics, and kept them laughing till they were tired. As they sat resting on the big sofa, they heard a soft, sweet voice singing. It wasn't mamma ; for she was only talking to baby, and this voice sang a real song. Presently they saw mamma's shadow on

the wall, and found it was the shadow-mother singing to the shadow-children. They listened intently, and this is what they heard :—

“ Little shadows, little shadows,
Dancing on the chamber wall,
While I sit beside the hearthstone
Where the red flames rise and fall.
Caps and nightgowns, caps and nightgowns,
My three antic shadows wear;
And no sound they make in playing,
For the six small feet are bare.

‘ Dancing gayly, dancing gayly,
To and fro all together,
Like a family of daisies
Blown about in windy weather;
Nimble fairies, nimble fairies,
Playing pranks in the warm glow,
While I sing the nursery ditties
Childish phantoms love and know.

“ Now what happens, now what happens ?
One small shadow’s tumbled down :
I can see it on the carpet,
Softly rubbing its hurt crown.
No one whimpers, no one whimpers ;
A brave-hearted sprite is this :
See ! the others offer comfort
In a silent, shadowy kiss.

“ Hush ! they’re creeping ; hush ! they’re creeping,
Up about my rocking-chair :
I can feel their loving fingers
Clasp my neck and touch my hair.
Little shadows, little shadows,
Take me captive, hold me tight,
As they climb and cling and whisper,
‘ Mother dear, good night ! good night ! ’ ”

As the song ended, the real children, as well as the shadows, lovingly kissed mamma, and said "Good-night;" then went away into their rooms, said their prayers, and nestled down into their beds. Ned slept alone in the room next that which Polly and Will had ; and, after lying quiet a little while, he called out softly,—

"I say, Polly, are you asleep?"

"No : I'm thinking what a queer day we've had," answered Polly.

"It's been a good day, and I'm glad we tried our wish; for the shadows showed us, as well as they could, what we ought to do and be. I shan't forget it, shall you?" said Ned.

"No : I'm much obliged for the lesson."

"So is I," called out Will, in a very earnest, but rather sleepy, little voice.

"I wonder what mamma will say, when we tell her about it," said Ned.

"And I wonder if our shadows will come back to us at midnight, and follow us as they used to do," added Polly.

"I shall be very careful where I lead my shadow ; 'cause he's a good little one, and set me a righter zarmple than ever I did him," said Will, and then dropped asleep.

The others agreed with him, and resolved that their shadows should not be ashamed of them. All were fast asleep ; and no one but the moon saw the shadows come stealing back at midnight, and, having danced about the little beds, vanish as the clock struck twelve.

POPPY'S PRANKS.

She wasn't a wilfully naughty child, this harum-scarum Poppy, but very thoughtless and very curious. She wanted to see every thing, do every thing, and go everywhere: she feared nothing, and so was continually getting into scrapes.

Her pranks began early; for, when she was about four, her mamma one day gave her a pair of green shoes with bright buttons. Poppy thought there never was any thing so splendid, and immediately wanted to go to walk. But mamma was busy, and Poppy couldn't go alone any farther than the garden. She showed her shoes to the servants, the cat, the doves, and the flowers; and then opened the gate that the people in the street might see the trim little feet she was so proud of. Now Poppy had been forbidden to go out; but, when she saw Kitty Allen, her neighbor, playing ball down the street, she forgot every thing but the desire to show her new shoes; and away she went marching primly along as vain as a little peacock, as she watched the bright buttons twinkle, and heard the charming creak. Kitty saw her coming; and, being an ill-natured little girl, took no notice, but called out to her brother Jack,—

“Ain’t some folks grand? If I couldn’t have red shoes for my best, I wouldn’t have any, would you?”

They both laughed, and this hurt Poppy's feelings dreadfully. She tossed her head, and tried to turn up her nose ; but, it was so very small, it couldn't be very scornful. She said nothing, but walked gravely by, as if she was going on an errand, and hadn't heard a word. Round the corner she went, thinking she would wait till Kitty was gone ; as she didn't like to pass again, fearing Jack might say something equally trying. An organ-man with a monkey was playing near by ; and Poppy was soon so busy listening to the music, and watching the sad-looking monkey, that she forgot home, shoes, and Kitty altogether.

She followed the man a long way ; and, when she turned to go back, she took the wrong street, and found herself by the park. Being fond of dandelions, Poppy went in, and gathered her hands full, enjoying herself immensely ; for Betsey, the maid, never let her play in the pond, or roll down the hill, or make dirt-pies, and now she did all these things, besides playing with strange children and talking with any one she pleased. If she had not had her luncheon just before she started, she would have been very hungry ; for dinner-time came, without her knowing it.

By three o'clock, she began to think it was time to go home, and boldly started off to find it. But poor little Poppy didn't know the way, and went all wrong. She was very tired now, and hot and hungry, and wanted to see mamma, and wondered why she didn't come to the brown house with the white garden-gate. On and on she went, up streets and down, amusing herself with looking in the shop-windows, and sitting to rest on door-steps. Once she asked a pleasant-faced little girl to show her the way home ; but, as she didn't know in what

street it was, and said her father's name was "papa," the girl couldn't help her: so she gave her a bun and went away. Poppy ate her bun, and began to wonder what would become of her; for night was coming on, and there didn't seem to be any prospect of finding mamma or home or bed. Her courage was all gone now; and, coming to a quiet place, she sat down on some high steps, and cried till her little "hankchif," as she called it, was all wet.

Nobody minded her: and she felt very forlorn till a big black dog came by, and seemed to understand the matter entirely; for he smelt of her face, licked her hands, and then lay down by her with such a friendly look in his brown eyes that Poppy was quite comforted. She told him her story, patted his big head; and then, being fairly tired out, laid her wet cheek on his soft back, and fell fast asleep.

It was quite dark when she woke; but a lamp was lighted near by, and standing under it was a man ringing a great bell. Poppy sat up, and wondered if anybody's supper was ready. The man had a paper; and, when people stopped at the sound of the bell, he read in a loud voice,—

"Lost! a little girl, four years old; curly brown hair, blue eyes; had on a white frock and green shoes; calls herself Poppy."

He got no farther; for a little voice cried out of the dark, in a tone of surprise,—

"Why, that's me!"

The people all turned to look; and the big man put his bell in his pocket, took her up very kindly, and said he'd carry her home.

"Is it far away?" asked Poppy, with a little sob.

"Yes, my dear ; but I am going to give you some supper fust, along of my little girl. I live close by ; and, when we've had a bite, we'll go find your ma."

Poppy was so tired and hungry, she was glad to find herself taken care of, and let the man do as he liked. He took her to a funny little house, and his wife gave her bread and molasses on a new tin plate with letters all round the edge. Poppy thought it very fine, and enjoyed her supper, though the man's little girl stared at her all the time with eyes as blue as her mug.

While she ate, the man sent word to her father that she was found ; and, when both papa and mamma came hurrying in all out of breath with joy, there sat Miss Poppy talking merrily, with her face well daubed with molasses, her gown torn, her hands very dirty, and her shoes — ah, the pretty new shoes ! — all spoiled with mud and dust, scratched, and half worn out, the buttons dull, and the color quite gone. No one cared for it that night ; for little runaway was kissed and petted, and taken home to her own cosey bed as tenderly as if she had done nothing naughty, and never frightened her parents out of their wits in her life.

But the next day, — dear me ! what a sad time it was, to be sure ! When Poppy woke up, there hung the spoilt shoes over the mantel-piece ; and, as soon as she was dressed, papa came in with a long cord, one end of which he tied round Poppy's waist, and the other to the arm of the sofa.

"I'm very sorry to have to tie you up, like a little dog ; but I must, or you will forget, and run away again, and make mamma ill."

Then he went away without his morning kiss, and Poppy was so very unhappy she could hardly eat her

breakfast. She felt better by and by, and tried to play ; but the cord kept pulling her back. She couldn't get to the window ; and, when she heard mamma passing the door, she tried to run and meet her, but had to stop half-way, for the cord jerked her over. Cousin Fanny came up, but Poppy was so ashamed to be tied that she crept under the sofa and hid. All day she was a prisoner, and was a very miserable little girl ; but at night she was untied, and, when mamma took her in her lap for the first time that day, Poppy held her fast, and sobbed very penitently, —

“O mamma ! I drefful sorry I runned away. Fordive me one time more, and I never will adain ;” and she never did.

Two or three years after this, Poppy went to live in the country, and tried some new pranks. One day she went with her sister Nelly to see a man plough, for that sort of thing was new to her. While the man worked, she saw him take out a piece of something brown, and bite off a bit.

“What's that ?” asked Poppy.

“Tobaccer,” said the man.

“Is it nice ?” asked Poppy.

“Prime,” said the man.

“Could you let me taste it ?” said curious Poppy.

“It will make you sick,” said the man, laughing.

“It don't make *you* sick. I'd like to try,” said Poppy, nothing daunted.

He gave her a piece ; and Poppy ate it, though it didn't taste good at all. She did it because Cy, her favorite playfellow, told her she'd die if she did, and tried to frighten her.

“You darsn't eat any more,” he said.

"Yes, I dare. See if I don't." And Poppy took another piece, just to show how brave she was. Silly little Poppy!

"I ain't sick, and I shan't die, so now."

And Poppy pranced about as briskly as ever. But the man shook his head, Nelly watched her anxiously, and Cy kept saying,—

"Ain't you sick yet, say?"

For a little while Poppy felt all right; but presently she grew rather pale, and began to look rather pensive. She stopped running, and walked slower and slower, while her eyes got dizzy, and her hands and feet very cold.

"Ain't you sick now, say?" repeated Cy; and Poppy tried to answer, "Oh, dear! no;" but a dreadful feeling came over her, and she could only shake her head, and hold on to Nelly.

"Better lay down a spell," said the man, looking a little troubled.

"I don't wish to dirty my clean frock," said Poppy faintly, as she glanced over the wide-ploughed field, and longed for a bit of grass to drop on. She kept up bravely for another turn; but suddenly stopped, and, quite regardless of the clean pink gown, dropped down in a furrow, looking so white and queer that Nelly began to cry. Poppy lay a minute, then turned to Cy, and said very solemnly,—

"Cy, run home, and tell my mother I'm dying."

Away rushed Cy in a great fright, and burst upon Poppy's mamma, exclaiming breathlessly,—

"O ma'am! Poppy's been and ate a lot of tobacco, and she's sick, layin' in the field; and she says, 'Come quick, 'cause she's dyin.' "

"Mercy on us! what will happen to that child next?" cried poor mamma, who was used to Poppy's mishaps. Papa was away, and there was no carriage to bring Poppy home in; so mamma took the little wheelbarrow, and trundled away to get the suffering Poppy.

She couldn't speak when they got to her; and, only stopping to give the man a lecture, mamma picked up her silly little girl, and the procession moved off. First came Cy, as grave as a sexton; then the wheelbarrow with Poppy, white and limp and speechless, all in a bunch; then mamma, looking amused, anxious, and angry; then Nelly, weeping as if her tender heart was entirely broken; while the man watched them, with a grin, saying to himself,—

"'Twarn't my fault. The child was a reg'lar fool to swaller it."

Poppy was dreadfully sick all night, but next day was ready for more adventures and experiments. She swung on the garret stairs, and tumbled down, nearly breaking her neck. She rubbed her eyes with red peppers, to see if it *really* would make them smart, as Cy said; and was led home quite blind and roaring with pain. She got into the pigsty to catch a young piggy, and was taken out in a sad state of dirt. She slipped into the brook, and was half drowned; broke a window and her own head, swinging a little flat-iron on a string; dropped baby in the coal-hod; buried her doll, and spoilt her; cut off a bit of her finger, chopping wood; and broke a tooth, trying to turn heels over head on a haycock. These are only a few of her pranks, but one was nearly her last.

She wanted to go bare-footed, as the little country boys and girls did; but mamma wasn't willing, and Poppy was much afflicted.

"It don't hurt Cy, and it won't hurt me, just for a little while," she said.

"Say no more, Poppy. I never wish to see you bare-footed," replied mamma.

"Well, you needn't: I'll go and do it in the barn," muttered Poppy, as she walked away.

Into the barn she went, and played country girl to her heart's content, in spite of Nelly's warnings. Nelly never got into scrapes, being a highly virtuous young lady; but she enjoyed Poppy's pranks, and wept over her misfortunes with sisterly fidelity.

"Now I'll be a bear, and jump at you as you go by," said Poppy, when they were tired of playing steam-engine with the old winnowing machine. So she got up on a beam; and Nelly, with a peck measure on her head for a hat, and a stick for a gun, went bear-hunting, and banged away at the swallows, the barrels, and the hen-coops, till the bear was ready to eat her. Presently, with a loud roar, the bear leaped; but Nelly wasn't eaten that time, for Poppy cried out with pain,—

"Oh! I jumped on a pitchfork, and it's in my foot! Take it out! take it out!"

Poor little foot! There was a deep purple hole in the sole, and the blood came, and Poppy fainted away, and Nelly screamed, and mamma ran, and the neighbors rushed in, and there was *such* a flurry. Poppy was soon herself again, and lay on the sofa, with Nelly and Cy to amuse her.

"What did the doctor say to mamma in the other room about me?" whispered Poppy, feeling very important at having such a bustle made on her account. Nelly sniffed, but said nothing; Cy, however, spoke up briskly:—

"He said you might have lockjaw."

"Is that bad?" asked Poppy gravely.

"Oh, aint it, though! Your mouth shuts up, and you can't open it; and you have fits and die."

"Always?" said Poppy, looking scared, and feeling of her mouth.

"Most always, I guess. That's why your ma cried, and Nelly keeps kissin' you."

Cy felt sorry, but rather enjoyed the excitement, and was sure, that, if any one ever *could* escape dying, it would be Poppy, for she always "came alive" again after her worst mishaps. She looked very solemn for a few minutes, and kept opening and shutting her mouth to see if it wasn't stiff. Presently she said, in a serious tone and with a pensive air,—

"Nelly, I'll give you my bead-ring: I shan't want it any more. And Cy may have the little horse: he lost his tail; but I put on the lamb's tail, and he is as good as ever. I wish to give away my things 'fore I die; and, Nelly, won't you bring me the scissors?"

"What for?" said Nelly, sniffing more than ever.

"To cut off my hair for mamma. She'll want it, and I like to cut things."

Nelly got the scissors; and Poppy cut away all she could reach, giving directions about her property while she snipped.

"I wish papa to have my pictures and my piece of poetry I made. Give baby my dolly and the quacking duck. Tell Billy, if he wants my collection of bright buttons, he can have 'em; and give Hattie the yellow plaster dog, with my love."

Here mamma came in with a poultice, and couldn't

help laughing, though tears stood in her eyes, as she saw Poppy's cropped head and heard her last wishes.

"I don't think I shall lose my little girl yet, so we won't talk of it. But Poppy must keep quiet, and let Nelly wait on her for a few days."

"Are fits bad, mamma? and does it hurt much to die?" asked Poppy thoughtfully.

"If people are good while they live, it is not hard to die, dear," said mamma, with a kiss; and Poppy hugged her, saying softly,—

"Then I'll be very good; so I won't mind, if the jaw-lock does come."

And Poppy *was* good,—oh, dreadfully good! for a week. Quite an angel was Poppy; so meek and gentle, so generous and obedient, you really wouldn't have known her. She loved everybody, forgave her playmates all their sins against her, let Nelly take such of her precious treasures as she liked, and pensively hoped baby would remember her when she was gone. She hopped about with a crutch, and felt as if she was an object of public interest; for all the old ladies sent to know how she was, the children looked at her with respectful awe as one set apart and doomed to fits, and Cy continually begged to know if her mouth was stiff.

Poppy didn't die, though she got all ready for it; and felt rather disappointed when the foot healed, the jaws remained as active as ever, and the fits didn't come. I think it did her good; for she never forgot that week, and, though she was near dying several times after, she never was so fit to go as she was then.

"Burney's making jelly: let's go and get our scrapings," said Poppy to Nelly once, when mamma was away.

But Burney was busy and cross, and cooks are not as patient as mothers ; so when the children appeared, each armed with a spoon, and demanded their usual feast, she wouldn't hear of it, and ordered them off.

"But we only want the scrapings of the pan, Burney : mamma always lets us have them, when we help her make jelly ; don't she, Nelly ?" said Poppy, trying to explain the case.

"Yes ; and makes us our little potful too," added Nelly persuasively.

"I don't want your help ; so be off. Your ma can fuss with your pot, if she chooses. I've no time."

"I think Burney's the crossest woman in the world. It's mean to eat all the scrapings herself ; isn't it, Nelly ?" said Poppy, very loud, as the cook shut the door in their faces. "Never mind : I know how to pay her," she added, in a whisper, as they sat on the stairs bewailing their wrongs. "She'll put her old jelly in the big closet, and lock the door ; but we can climb the plum-tree, and get in at the window, when she takes her nap."

"Should we dare to eat any ?" asked Nelly, timid, but longing for the forbidden fruit.

"I should ; just as much as ever I like. It's mamma's jelly, and she won't mind. I don't care for old cross Burney," said Poppy, sliding down the banisters by way of soothing her ruffled spirit.

So when Burney went to her room after dinner, the two rogues climbed in at the window ; and, each taking a jar, sat on the shelf, dipping in their fingers and revelling rapturously. But Burney wasn't asleep, and, hearing a noise below, crept down to see what mischief was going on. Pausing in the entry to listen, she heard whispering, clattering of glasses, and smacking of lips

in the big closet ; and in a moment knew that her jelly was lost. She tried the door with her key ; but sly Poppy had bolted it on the inside, and, feeling quite safe, defied Burney from among the jelly-pots, entirely reckless of consequences. Short-sighted Poppy ! she forgot Cy ; but Burney didn't, and sent him to climb in at the window, and undo the door. Feeling hurt that the young ladies hadn't asked him to the feast, Cy hardened his heart against them, and delivered them up to the enemy, regardless of Poppy's threats and Nelly's prayers.

" Poppy proposed it, she broke the jar, and I didn't eat much ; and O Burney ! don't hurt her, please, but let me 'splain it to mamma when she comes," sobbed Nelly, as Burney seized Poppy, and gave her a good shaking.

" You go wash your face, Miss Nelly, and leave this naughty, naughty child to me," said Burney ; and took Poppy, kicking and screaming, into the little library, where she — oh, dreadful to relate ! — gave her a good spanking, and locked her up.

Mamma never whipped, and Poppy was in a great rage at such an indignity. The minute she was left alone, she looked about to see how she could be revenged. A solar lamp stood on the table ; and Poppy coolly tipped it over, with a fine smash, calling out to Burney that she'd have to pay for it, that mamma would be very angry, and that she, Poppy, was going to spoil every thing in the room. But Burney was gone, and no one came near her. She kicked the paint off the door, rattled the latch, called Burney a " pig," and Cy " a badger boy than the man who smothered the little princes in the Tower." Poppy was very fond of that story, and often played it with Nelly and the dolls. Having

relieved her feelings in this way, Poppy rested, and then set about amusing herself. Observing that the spilt oil made the table shine, she took her handkerchief and polished up the furniture, as she had seen the maids do.

"Now, that looks nice ; and I know mamma will be pleased 'cause I'm so tidy," she said, surveying her work with pride, when she had thoroughly greased every table, chair, picture-frame, book-back, and ornament in the room. Plenty of oil still remained ; and Poppy finished off by oiling her hair, till it shone finely, and smelt—dear me, how it did smell ! If she had been a young whale, it couldn't have been worse. Poppy wasn't particular about smells ; but she got some in her mouth, and didn't like the taste. There was no water to wash in ; and her hands, face, and pinafore were in a high state of grease. She was rather lonely too ; for, though mamma had got home, she didn't come to let Poppy out : so the young rebel thought it was about time to surrender. She could write pretty well, and was fond of sending penitent notes to mamma, after being naughty : for mamma always answered them so kindly, and was so forgiving, that Poppy's naughtiest mood was conquered by them sooner than by any punishment ; and Poppy kept the notes carefully in a little cover, even after she was grown up. There was pen, ink, and paper in the room ; so, after various trials, Poppy wrote her note :—

"dear Mamma.

"i am sorry i Took bernys gelli. i have braked The lamP. The oyl maks A bad smel. i tHink i wil Bee sik iF i stay HeRe anny More. i LoVe yoU — your Trying To Bee GooD popy."

When she had finished, she lowered her note by a string, and bobbed it up and down before the parlor window till Nelly saw and took it in. Every one laughed over it ; for, besides the bad spelling and the funny periods, it was covered with oil-spots, blots, and tear marks ; for Poppy got tender-hearted toward the end, and cried a few very repentant tears when she said, "I love you ; your trying-to-be-good Poppy."

Mamma went up at once, and ordered no further punishment, but a thorough scrubbing ; which Poppy underwent very meekly, though Betsey put soap in her eyes, pulled her hair, and scolded all the time. They were not allowed any jelly for a long while ; and Cy teased Poppy about her hair-oil till the joke was quite worn out, and even cross Burney satisfied with the atonement.

When Poppy was eight, she got so very wild that no one could manage her but mamma, and she was ill ; so Poppy was sent away to grandpa's for a visit. Now, grandpa was a very stately old gentleman, and every one treated him with great respect ; but Poppy wasn't at all afraid, and asked all manner of impolite questions.

"Grandpa, why don't you have any hair on the top of your head?" — "O grandpa ! you *do* snore *so* loud when you take naps!" — "What makes you turn out your feet so, when you walk?" and such things.

If grandpa hadn't been the best-natured old gentleman in the world, he wouldn't have liked this : but he only laughed at Poppy, especially when she spoke of his legs ; for he was rather proud of them, and always wore long black silk stockings, and told every one that the legs were so handsome an artist put them in a

picture of General Washington ; which was quite true, as any one may see when they look at the famous picture in Boston.

Well, Poppy behaved herself respectably for a day or two ; but the house was rather dull, she missed Nelly, wanted to run in the street, and longed to see mamma. She amused herself as well as she could with picture-books, patchwork, and the old cat ; but, not being a quiet, proper, little Rosamond sort of a child, she got tired of hemming neat pocket-handkerchiefs, and putting her needle carefully away when she had done. She wanted to romp and shout, and slide down the banisters, and riot about ; so, when she couldn't be quiet another minute, she went up into a great empty room at the top of the house, and cut up all sorts of capers. Her great delight was to lean out of the window as far as she could, and look at the people in the street, with her head upside down. It was very dangerous, for a fall would have killed her ; but the danger was the fun, and Poppy hung out till her hands touched the ledge below, and her face was as red as any real poppy's.

She was enjoying herself in this way one day, when an old gentleman, who lived near, came home to dinner, and saw her.

" What in the world is that hanging out of the colonel's upper window ? " said he, putting on his spectacles. " Bless my soul ! that child will kill herself. Hallo, there ! little girl ; get in this minute ! " he called to Poppy, flourishing his hat to make her see him.

" What for ? " answered Poppy, staring at him without moving an inch.

" You'll fall, and break your neck ! " screamed the old gentleman.

"Oh, no, I shan't!" returned Poppy, much flattered by his interest, and hanging out still farther.

"Stop that, instantly, or I'll go in and inform the colonel!" roared the old gentleman, getting angry.

"I don't care," shouted Poppy; and she didn't, for she knew grandpa wasn't at home.

"Little gypsy! I'll settle her," muttered the old man, bustling up the steps, and ringing the bell, as if the house was on fire.

No one was in but the servants; and, when he'd told old Emily what the matter was, she went up to "settle" Poppy. But Poppy was already settled, demurely playing with her doll, and looking quite innocent. Emily scolded; and Poppy promised never to do it again, if she might stay and play in the big room. Being busy about dinner, Emily was glad to be rid of her, and left her, to go and tell the old gentleman it was all right.

"Ain't they crosspatches?" said Poppy to her doll. "Never mind, dear: *you* shall hang out, if I can't. I guess the old man won't order you in, any way."

Full of this idea, Poppy took her long-suffering dolly, and, tying a string to her neck, danced her out of the window. Now this dolly had been through a great deal. Her head had been cut off (and put on again); she had been washed, buried, burnt, torn, soiled, and banged about till she was a mournful object. Poppy loved her very much; for she was two feet tall, and had once been very handsome: so her trials only endeared her to her little mamma. Away she went, skipping and prancing like mad,—a funny sight, for Poppy had taken off her clothes, and she hadn't a hair on her head.

Poppy went to another window of the room for this performance, because in the opposite house lived five

or six children, and she thought they would enjoy the fun.

So they did, and so did the other people ; for it was a boarding-house, and all the people were at home for dinner. They came to the windows, and looked and laughed at dolly's capers, and Poppy was in high feather at the success of her entertainment.

All of a sudden she saw grandpa coming down the street, hands behind his back, feet turned out, gold-headed cane under his arm, and the handsome legs in the black silk stockings marching along in the most stately manner. Poppy whisked dolly in before grandpa saw her, and dodged down as he went by. This made the people laugh again, and grandpa wondered what the joke was. The minute he went in out flew dolly, dancing more frantically than ever ; and the children shouted so loud that grandpa went to see what the matter was. The street was empty ; yet there stood the people, staring out and laughing, Yes : they were actually looking and laughing at *his* house ; and he didn't see what there was to laugh at in that highly respectable mansion.

He didn't like it ; and, clapping on his hat, he went out to learn what the matter was. He looked over at the house, up at the sky, down at the ground, and through the street ; but nothing funny appeared, for Poppy and dolly were hidden again, and the old gentleman was puzzled. He went in and sat down to watch, feeling rather disturbed. Presently the fun began again : the children clapped their hands, the people laughed, and every one looked over at the house, in what he thought a very impertinent way. This made him angry ; and out he rushed a second time, saying, as he marched across the street, —

"If those saucy young fellows are making game of me, I'll soon stop it."

Up to the door he went, gave a great pull at the bell, and, when the servant came, he demanded why every one was laughing at his house. One of the young men came and told him, and asked him to come in and see the fun. Poppy didn't see grandpa go in, for she hid, and when she looked out he was gone: so she boldly began the dancing; but, in the midst of a lively caper, dolly went bounce into the garden below, for the string fell from Poppy's hand when she suddenly saw grandpa at the window opposite, laughing as heartily as any one at her prank.

She stared at him in a great fright, and looked so amazed that every one enjoyed that joke better than the other; and poor Poppy didn't hear the last of it for a long time.

Her next performance was to fall into the pond on the Common. She was driving hoop down the hill, and went so fast she couldn't stop herself; so splashed into the water, hoop and all. How dreadful it was to feel the cold waves go over her head, shutting out the sun and air! The ground was gone, and she could find no place for her feet, and could only struggle and choke, and go down, down, with a loud roaring sound in her ears. That would have been the end of Poppy, if a little black boy hadn't jumped in and pulled her out. She was sick and dizzy, and looked like a drowned kitten; but a kind lady took her home in a carriage. After that mishap grandpa thought he wouldn't keep her any longer, for fear she should come to some worse harm. So Miss Poppy was sent home, much to her delight and

much to mamma's also ; for no matter where she went, or how naughty she was, mamma was always glad to see the little wanderer back, and to forgive and forget all Poppy's pranks.



WHAT THE SWALLOWS DID.

A MAN lay on a pile of new-made hay, in a great barn, looking up at the swallows who darted and twittered above him. He envied the cheerful little creatures ; for he wasn't a happy man, though he had many friends, much money, and the beautiful gift of writing songs that everybody loved to sing. He had lost his wife and little child, and would not be comforted ; but lived alone, and went about with such a gloomy face that no one liked to speak to him. He took no notice of friends and neighbors ; neither used his money for himself nor others ; found no beauty in the world, no happiness anywhere ; and wrote such sad songs it made one's heart ache to sing them.

As he lay alone on the sweet-smelling hay, with the afternoon sunshine streaming in, and the busy birds chirping overhead, he said sadly to himself, —

“ Happy swallows, I wish I was one of you ; for you have no pains nor sorrows, and your cares are very light. All summer you live gayly together ; and, when winter comes, you fly away to the lovely South, unseparated still.”

“ Neighbors, do you hear what that lazy creature down there is saying ? ” cried a swallow, peeping over the edge

of her nest, and addressing several others who sat on a beam near by.

"We hear, Mrs. Skim ; and quite agree with you that he knows very little about us and our affairs," answered one of the swallows with a shrill chirp, like a scornful laugh. "We work harder than he does any day. Did he build his own house, I should like to know? Does he get his daily bread for himself? How many of his neighbors does he help? How much of the world does he see, and who is the happier for his being alive?"

"Cares indeed!" cried another: "I wish he'd undertake to feed and teach my brood. Much he knows about the anxieties of a parent." And the little mother bustled away to get supper for the young ones, whose bills were always gaping wide.

"Sorrows we have, too," softly said the fourth swallow. "He would not envy *me*, if he knew how my nest fell, and all my children were killed; how my dear husband was shot, and my old mother died of fatigue on our spring journey from the South."

"Dear Neighbor Dart, he *would* envy you, if he knew how patiently you bear your troubles; how tenderly you help us with our little ones; how cheerfully you serve your friends; how faithfully you love your lost mate; and how trustfully you wait to meet him again in a lovelier country than the South."

As Skim spoke, she leaned down from her nest to kiss her neighbor; and, as the little beaks met, the other birds gave a grateful and approving murmur, for Neighbor Dart was much beloved by all the inhabitants of Twittertown.

"I, for my part, don't envy *him*," said Gossip Wing, who was fond of speaking her mind. "Men and women call themselves superior beings; but, upon my word, I

think they are vastly inferior to us. Now, look at that man, and see how he wastes his life. There never was any one with a better chance for doing good, and being happy ; and yet he mopes and dawdles his time away most shamefully."

"Ah ! he has had a great sorrow, and it is hard to be gay with a heavy heart, an empty home ; so don't be too severe, Sister Wing." And the white tie of the little widow's cap was stirred by a long sigh as Mrs. Dart glanced up at the nook where her nest once stood.

"No, my dear, I won't ; but really I do get out of patience when I see so much real misery which that man might help, if he'd only forget himself a little. It's my opinion he'd be much happier than he now is, wandering about with a dismal face and a sour temper."

"I quite agree with you ; and I dare say he'd thank any one for telling him how he may find comfort. Poor soul ! I wish he could understand me ; for I sympathize with him, and would gladly help him if I could."

And, as she spoke, kind-hearted Widow Dart skimmed by him with a friendly chirp, which did comfort him ; for, being a poet, he *could* understand them, and lay listening, well pleased while the little gossips chattered on together.

"I am so tied at home just now, that I know nothing of what is going on, except the bits of news Skim brings me ; so I enjoy your chat immensely. I'm interested in your views on this subject, and beg you'll tell me what you'd have that man do to better himself," said Mrs. Skim, settling herself on her eggs with an attentive air.

"Well, my dear, I'll tell you ; for I've seen a deal of the world, and any one is welcome to my experience," replied Mrs. Wing, in an important manner ; for she was

proud of her “views,” and very fond of talking. “In my daily flights about the place, I see a great deal of poverty and trouble, and often wish I could lend a hand. Now, this man has plenty of money and time ; and he might do more good than I can tell, if he’d only set about it. Because he is what they call a poet is no reason he should go moaning up and down, as if he had nothing to do but make songs. We sing, but we work also ; and are wise enough to see the necessity of both, thank goodness !”

“Yes, indeed, we do,” cried all the birds in a chorus ; for several more had stopped to hear what was going on.

“Now, what I say is this,” continued Mrs. Wing impressively. “If I were that man, I’d make myself useful at once. There is poor little Will getting more and more lame every day, because his mother can’t send him where he can be cured. A trifle of that man’s money would do it, and he ought to give it. Old Father Winter is half starved, alone there in his miserable hovel ; and no one thinks of the good old man. Why don’t that lazy creature take him home, and care for him, the little while he has to live ? Pretty Nell is working day and night, to support her father, and is too proud to ask help, though her health and courage are going fast. The man might make her’s the gayest heart alive, by a little help. There in a lonely garret lives a young man studying his life away, longing for books and a teacher. The man has a library full, and might keep the poor boy from despair by a little help and a friendly word. He mourns for his own lost baby : I advise him to adopt the orphan whom nobody will own, and who lies wailing all day un-tended on the poor-house floor. Yes : if he wants to forget sorrow and find peace, let him fill his empty heart and home with such as these, and life won’t seem dark to him any more.”

" Dear me ! how well you express yourself, Mrs. Wing ! it's quite a pleasure to hear you ; and I heartily wish some persons could hear you, it would do 'em a deal of good," said Mrs. Skim ; while her husband gave an approving nod as he dived off the beam, and vanished through the open doors.

" I know it would comfort that man to do these things ; for I have tried the same cure in my small way, and found great satisfaction in it," began little Madam Dart, in her soft voice ; but Mrs. Wing broke in, saying with a pious expression of countenance :—

" I flew into church one day, and sat on the organ enjoying the music ; for every one was singing, and I joined in, though I didn't know the air. Opposite me were two great tablets with golden letters on them. I can read a little, thanks to my friend, the learned raven ; and so I spelt out some of the words. One was, ' Love thy neighbor ; ' and as I sat there, looking down on the people, I wondered how they could see those words week after week, and yet pay so little heed to them. Goodness knows, *I* don't consider myself a perfect bird ; far from it ; for I know I am a poor, erring fowl ; but I believe I may say I *do* love my neighbor, though I *am* 'an inferior creature.' " And Mrs. Wing bridled up, as if she resented the phrase immensely.

" Indeed you do, gossip," cried Dart and Skim ; for Wing was an excellent bird, in spite of the good opinion she had of herself.

" Thank you : well, then, such being the known fact, I may give advice on the subject as one having authority ; and, if it were possible, I'd give that man a bit of my mind."

" You have, madam, you have ; and I shall not forget

it. "Thank you, neighbors, and good night," said the man, as he left the barn, with the first smile on his face which it had worn for many days.

"Mercy on us! I do believe the creature heard every thing we said," cried Mrs. Wing, nearly tumbling off the beam, in her surprise.

"He certainly did; so I'm glad I was guarded in my remarks," replied Mrs. Skim, laughing at her neighbor's dismay.

"Dear me! dear me! what did I say?" cried Mrs. Wing, in a great twitter.

"You spoke with more than your usual bluntness, and some of your expressions were rather strong, I must confess; but I don't think any harm will come of it. We are of too little consequence for our criticisms or opinions to annoy him," said Mrs. Dart consolingly.

"I don't know that, ma'am," returned Mrs. Wing, sharply; for she was much ruffled and out of temper. "A cat may look at a king; and a bird may teach a man, if the bird is the wisest. He may destroy my nest, and take my life; but I feel that I have done my duty, and shall meet affliction with a firmness which will be an example to that indolent, ungrateful man."

In spite of her boasted firmness, Mrs. Wing dropped her voice, and peeped over the beam, to be sure the man was gone before she called him names; and then flew away, to discover what he meant to do about it.

For several days, there was much excitement in Twittertown; for news of what had happened flew from nest to nest, and every bird was anxious to know what revenge the man would take for the impertinent remarks which had been made about him.

Mrs. Wing was in a dreadful state of mind, expecting

an assault, and the destruction of her entire family. Every one blamed her. Her husband lectured ; the young birds chirped, "Chatterbox, chatterbox," as she passed ; and her best friends were a little cool. All this made her very meek for a time ; and she scarcely opened her bill, except to eat.

A guard was set day and night, to see if any danger approached ; and a row of swallows might be seen on the ridgepole at all hours. If any one entered the barn, dozens of little black heads peeped cautiously over the edges of the nests, and there was much flying to and fro with reports and rumors ; for all the birds in the town soon knew that something had happened.

The day after the imprudent conversation, a chimney-swallow came to call on Mrs. Wing ; and, the moment she was seated on the beam, she began :—

"My dear creature, I feel for you in your trying position,—indeed I do, and came over at once to warn you of your danger."

"Mercy on us ! what is coming ?" cried Mrs. Wing, covering her brood with trembling wings, and looking quite wild with alarm.

"Be calm, my friend, and bear with firmness the consequences of your folly," replied Mrs. Sooty-back, who didn't like Mrs. Wing, because she prided herself on her family, and rather looked down on chimney-swallows. "You know, ma'am, I live at the great house, and am in the way of seeing and hearing all that goes on there. No fire is lit in the study now ; but my landlord still sits on the hearth, and I can overhear every word he says. Last evening, after my darlings were asleep, and my husband gone out, I went down and sat on the andiron, as I often do ; for the fireplace is full of

oak boughs, and I can peep out unseen. My landlord sat there, looking a trifle more cheerful than usual, and I heard him say, in a very decided tone,—

“‘I’ll catch them, one and all, and keep them here; that is better than pulling the place down, as I planned at first. Those swallows little know what they have done; but I’ll show them I don’t forget.’”

On hearing this a general wail arose, and Mrs. Wing fainted entirely away. Madam Sooty-back was quite satisfied with the effect she had produced, and departed, saying loftily,—

“I’m sorry for you, Mrs. Wing, and forgive your rude speech about my being related to chimney-sweeps. One can’t expect good manners from persons brought up in mud houses, and entirely shut out from good society. If I hear any thing more, I’ll let you know.”

Away she flew; and poor Mrs. Wing would have had another fit, if they hadn’t tickled her with a feather, and fanned her so violently that she was nearly blown off her nest by the breeze they raised.

“What shall we do?” she cried.

“Nothing, but wait. I dare say, Mrs. Sooty-back is mistaken; at any rate, we can’t get away without leaving our children, for they can’t fly yet. Let us wait, and see what happens. If the worst comes, we shall have done our duty, and will all die together.”

As no one could suggest any thing better, Mrs. Dart’s advice was taken, and they waited. On the afternoon of the same day, Dr. Banks, a sand-swallow, who lived in a subterranean village over by the great sand-bank, looked in to see Mrs. Wing, and cheered her by the following bit of news:—

“The man was down at the poor-house to-day, and

took away little Nan, the orphan baby. I saw him carry her to Will's mother, and heard him ask her to take care of it for a time. He paid her well, and she seemed glad to do it; for Will needs help, and now he can have it. An excellent arrangement, I think. Bless me, ma'am! what's the matter? Your pulse is altogether too fast, and you look feverish."

No wonder the doctor looked surprised; for Mrs. Wing suddenly gave a skip, and flapped her wings, with a shrill chirp, exclaiming, as she looked about her triumphantly,—

“Now, who was right? Who has done good, not harm, by what you call ‘gossip’? Who has been a martyr, and patiently borne all kinds of blame, injustice, and disrespect? Yes, indeed! the man saw the sense of my words; he took my advice; he will show his gratitude by some good turn yet; and, if half a dozen poor souls are helped, it will be my doing, and mine alone.”

Here she had to stop for breath; and her neighbors all looked at one another, feeling undecided whether to own they were wrong, or to put Mrs. Wing down. Every one twittered and chirped, and made a great noise; but no one would give up, and all went to roost in a great state of uncertainty. But, the next day, it became evident that Mrs. Wing was right; for Major Bumble-bee came buzzing in to tell them that old Daddy Winter's hut was empty, and his white head had been seen in the sunny porch of the great house.

After this, the swallows gave in; and, as no harm came to them, they had a jubilee in honor of the occasion. Mrs. Wing was president, and received a vote of thanks for the good she had done, and the credit she had bestowed upon the town by her wisdom and courage.

She was much elated by all this ; but her fright had been of service, and she bore her honors more meekly than one would have supposed. To be sure, she cut Mrs. Sooty-back when they met ; assumed an injured air, when some of her neighbors passed her ; and said, "I told you so," a dozen times a day to her husband, who got so many curtain lectures that he took to sleeping on the highest rafter, pretending that the children's noise disturbed him.

All sorts of charming things happened after that, and such a fine summer never was known before ; for not only did the birds rejoice, but people also. A good spirit seemed to haunt the town, leaving help and happiness wherever it passed. Some unseen hand scattered crumbs over the barn-floor, and left food at many doors. No dog or boy or gun marred the tranquillity of the birds, insects, and flowers who lived on the great estate. No want, care, or suffering, that love or money could prevent, befell the poor folk whose cottages stood near the old house. Sunshine and peace seemed to reign there ; for its gloomy master was a changed man now, and the happiness he earned for himself, by giving it to others, flowed out in beautiful, blithe songs, and went singing away into the world, making him friends, and bringing him honor in high places as well as low.

He did not forget the wife and little child whom he had loved so well ; but he mourned no longer, for cheerful daisies grew above their graves, and he knew that he should meet them in the lovely land where death can never come. So, while he waited for that happy time to come, he made his life a cheery song,—as every one may do, if they will ; and went about dropping kind words and deeds as silently and sweetly as the sky

drops sunshine and dew. Every one was his friend, but his favorites were the swallows. Every day he went to see them, carrying grain and crumbs, hearing their chat sharing their joys and sorrows, and never tiring of their small friendship ; for to them, he thought, he owed all the content now his.

When autumn leaves were red, and autumn winds blew cold, the inhabitants of Twittertown prepared for their journey to the South. They lingered longer than usual this year, feeling sorry to leave their friend. But the fields were bare, the frosts began to pinch, and the young ones longed to see the world ; so they must go. The day they started, the whole flock flew to the great house, to say good-by. Some dived and darted round and round it, some hopped to and fro on the sere lawn, some perched on the chimney-tops, and some clung to the window ledges ; all twittering a loving farewell.

Chirp, Dart, and Wing peeped everywhere, and everywhere found something to rejoice over. In a cosey room, by a bright fire, sat Daddy Winter and Nell's old father, telling stories of their youth, and basking in the comfortable warmth. In the study, surrounded by the books he loved, was the poor young man, happy as a king now, and learning many things which no book could teach him ; for he had found a friend. Then, down below was Will's mother, working like a bee ; for she was housekeeper, and enjoyed her tasks as much as any mother-bird enjoys filling the little mouths of her brood. Close by was pretty Nell, prettier than ever now ; for her heavy care was gone, and she sung as she sewed, thinking of the old father, whom nothing could trouble any more.

But the pleasantest sight the three gossips saw was

the man with Baby Nan on his arm and Will at his side, playing in the once dreary nursery. How they laughed and danced ! for Will was up from his bed at last, and hopped nimbly on his crutches, knowing that soon even they would be unneeded. Little Nan was as plump and rosy as a baby should be, and babbled like a brook, as the man went to and fro, cradling her in his strong arms, feeling as if his own little daughter had come back when he heard the baby voice call him father.

"Ah, how sweet it is !" cried Mrs. Dart, glad to see that he had found comfort for his grief.

"Yes, indeed : it does one's heart good to see such a happy family," added Mrs. Skim, who was a very motherly bird.

"I don't wish to boast ; but I *will* say that I am satisfied with my summer's work, and go South feeling that I leave an enviable reputation behind me." And Mrs. Wing plumed herself with an air of immense importance, as she nodded and bridled from her perch on the window-sill.

The man saw the three, and hastened to feed them for the last time, knowing that they were about to go. Gratefully they ate, and chirped their thanks ; and then, as they flew away, the little gossips heard their friend singing his good-by :—

"Swallow, swallow, neighbor swallow,
Starting on your autumn flight,
Pause a moment at my window,
Twitter softly your good-night ;
For the summer days are over,
All your duties are well done,
And the happy homes you builded
Have grown empty, one by one.

“Swallow, swallow, neighbor swallow,
Are you ready for your flight?
Are all the feather cloaks completed?
Are the little caps all right?
Are the young wings strong and steady
For the journey through the sky?
Come again in early spring-time;
And till then, good-by, good-by!”



LITTLE GULLIVER.

UP in the light-house tower lived Davy, with Old Dan the keeper. Most little boys would have found it very lonely ; but Davy had three friends, and was as happy as the day was long. One of Davy's friends was the great lamp, which was lit at sunset, and burnt all night, to guide the ships into the harbor. To Dan it was only a lamp ; but to the boy it seemed a living thing, and he loved and tended it faithfully. Every day he helped Dan clear the big wick, polish the brass-work, and wash the glass lantern which protected the flame. Every evening he went up to see it lighted, and always fell asleep, thinking, "No matter how dark or wild the night, my good Shine will save the ships that pass, and burn till morning."

Davy's second friend was Nep, the Newfoundland, who was washed ashore from a wreck, and had never left the island since. Nep was rough and big, but had such a loyal and loving heart that no one could look in his soft brown eyes and not trust him. He followed Davy's steps all day, slept at his feet all night, and more than once had saved his life when Davy fell among the rocks, or got caught by the rising tide.

But the dearest friend of all was a sea-gull. Davy found him, with a broken wing, and nursed him carefully

till he was well ; then let him go, though he was very fond of " Little Gulliver," as he called him in fun. But the bird never forgot the boy, and came daily to talk with him, telling all manner of wild stories about his wanderings by land and sea, and whiling away many an hour that otherwise would have been very lonely.

Old Dan was Davy's uncle,—a grim, gray man, who said little, did his work faithfully, and was both father and mother to Davy, who had no parents, and no friends beyond the island. That was his world ; and he led a quiet life among his playfellows,—the winds and waves. He seldom went to the main land, three miles away ; for he was happier at home. He watched the sea-anemones open below the water, looking like fairy-plants, brilliant and strange. He found curious and pretty shells, and sometimes more valuable treasures, washed up from some wreck. He saw little yellow crabs, ugly lobsters, and queer horse-shoes with their stiff tails. Sometimes a whale or a shark swam by, and often sleek black seals came up to bask on the warm rocks. He gathered lovely sea-weeds of all kinds, from tiny red cobwebs to great scalloped leaves of kelp, longer than himself. He heard the waves dash and roar unceasingly ; the winds howl or sigh over the island ; and the gulls scream shrilly as they dipped and dived, or sailed away to follow the ships that came and went from all parts of the world.

With Nep and Gulliver he roamed about his small kingdom, never tired of its wonders ; or, if storms raged, he sat up in the tower, safe and dry, watching the tumult of sea and sky. Often in long winter nights he lay awake, listening to the wind and rain, that made the tower rock with their violence ; but he never was afraid, for Nep nestled at his feet, Dan sat close by, and overhead the

great lamp shone far out into the night, to cheer and guide all wanderers on the sea.

Close by the tower hung the fog-bell, which, being wound up, would ring all night, warningly. One day Dan found that something among the chains was broken ; and, having vainly tried to mend it, he decided to go to the town, and get what was needed. He went once a week, usually, and left Davy behind ; for in the daytime there was nothing to do, and the boy was not afraid to stay.

“ A heavy fog is blowing up : we shall want the bell to-night, and I must be off at once. I shall be back before dark, of course ; so take care of yourself, boy,” said Dan.

Away went the little boat ; and the fog shut down over it, as if a misty wall had parted Davy from his uncle. As it was dull weather, he sat and read for an hour or two ; then fell asleep, and forgot everything till Nep’s cold nose on his hand waked him up. It was nearly dark ; and, hoping to find Dan had come, he ran down to the landing-place. But no boat was there, and the fog was thicker than ever.

Dan never had been gone so long before, and Davy was afraid something had happened to him. For a few minutes he was in great trouble ; then he cheered up, and took courage.

“ It is sunset by the clock ; so I’ll light the lamp, and, if Dan is lost in the fog, it will guide him home,” said Davy.

Up he went, and soon the great star shone out above the black-topped light-house, glimmering through the fog, as if eager to be seen. Davy had his supper, but no Dan came. He waited hour after hour, and waited all in vain. The fog thickened, till the lamp was hardly seen ; and no bell rung to warn the ships of the dangerous

rocks. Poor Davy could not sleep, but all night long wandered from the tower to the door, watching, calling, and wondering ; but Dan did not come.

At sunrise he put out the light, and, having trimmed it for the next night, ate a little breakfast, and roved about the island hoping to see some sign of Dan. The sun drew up the fog at last ; and he could see the blue bay, the distant town, and a few fishing-boats going out to sea. But nowhere was the island-boat with gray Old Dan in it ; and Davy's heart grew heavier and heavier, as the day passed, and still no one came. In the afternoon Gulliver appeared : to him Davy told his trouble, and the three friends took counsel together.

"There is no other boat ; and I couldn't row so far, if there was : so I can't go to find Dan," said David sorrowfully.

"I'd gladly swim to town, if I could ; but it's impossible to do it, with wind and tide against me. I've howled all day, hoping some one would hear me ; but no one does, and I'm discouraged," said Nep, with an anxious expression.

"I can do something for you ; and I will, with all my heart. I'll fly to town, if I don't see him in the bay, and try to learn what has become of Dan. Then I'll come and tell you, and we will see what is to be done next. Cheer up, Davy dear : I'll bring you tidings, if any can be had." With these cheerful words, away sailed Gulliver, leaving Nep and his master to watch and wait again.

The wind blew hard, and the broken wing was not quite well yet, else Gulliver would have been able to steer clear of a boat that came swiftly by. A sudden gust drove the gull so violently against the sail that he dropped breathless into the boat ; and a little girl caught him, before he could recover himself.

"Oh, what a lovely bird ! See his black cap, his white breast, dove-colored wings, red legs and bill, and soft, bright eyes. I wanted a gull ; and I'll keep this one, for I don't think he is much hurt."

Poor Gulliver struggled, pecked, and screamed ; but little Dora held him fast, and shut him in a basket till they reached the shore. Then she put him in a lobster-pot,—a large wooden thing, something like a cage,—and left him on the lawn, where he could catch glimpses of the sea, and watch the light-house tower, as he sat alone in this dreadful prison. If Dora had known the truth, she would have let him go, and done her best to help him ; but she could not understand his speech, as Davy did, for very few people have the power of talking with birds, beasts, insects, and plants. To her, his prayers and cries were only harsh screams ; and, when he sat silent, with drooping head and ruffled feathers, she thought he was sleepy : but he was mourning for Davy, and wondering what his little friend would do.

For three long days and nights he was a prisoner, and suffered much. The house was full of happy people, but no one took pity upon him. Ladies and gentlemen talked learnedly about him ; boys poked and pulled him ; little girls admired him, and begged his wings for their hats, if he died. Cats prowled about his cage ; dogs barked at him ; hens cackled over him ; and a shrill canary jeered at him from the pretty pagoda in which it hung, high above danger. In the evening there was music ; and the poor bird's heart ached as the sweet sounds came to him, reminding him of the airier melodies he loved. Through the stillness of the night, he heard the waves break on the shore ; the wind came singing up from the sea ; the moon shone kindly on him, and he saw the water-

fairies dancing on the sand. But for three days no one spoke a friendly word to him, and he pined away with a broken heart.

On the fourth night, when all was quiet, little Gulliver saw a black shadow steal across the lawn, and heard a soft voice say to him,—

“Poor bird, you’ll die, if yer stays here ; so I’se gwine to let yer go. Specs little missy’ll scold dreffle ; but Moppet ’ll take de scoldin fer yer. Hi, dere ! you is peart nuff now, kase you’s in a hurry to go ; but jes wait till I gits de knots out of de string dat ties de door, and den away you flies.”

“But, dear, kind Moppet, wont you be hurt for doing this ? Why do you care so much for me ? I can only thank you, and fly away.”

As Gulliver spoke, he looked up at the little black face bent over him, and saw tears in the child’s sad eyes ; but she smiled at him, and shook her fuzzy head, as she whispered kindly,—

“I dont want no tanks, birdie : I loves to let you go, kase you’s a slave, like I was once ; and it’s a dreffle hard ting, I knows. I got away, and I means you shall. I’se watched you, deary, all dese days ; and I tried to come ’fore, but dey didn’t give me no chance.”

“Do you live here ? I never see you playing with the other children,” said the gull, as Moppet’s nimble fingers picked away at the knots.

“Yes : I lives here, and helps de cook. You didn’t see me, kase I never plays ; de chilen dont like me.”

“Why not ?” asked Gulliver, wondering.

“I’se black,” said Moppet, with a sob.

“But that’s silly in them,” cried the bird, who had never heard of such a thing. “Color makes no differ-

ence : the peeps are gray, the seals black, and the crabs yellow ; but we don't care, and are all friends. It is very unkind to treat you so. Haven't you any friends to love you, dear ? ”

“ Nobody in de world keres fer me. Dey sold me way from my mammy when I was a baby, and I'se knocked roun eber since. De oder chilen has folks to lub an kere fer em, but Moppet's got no friends ; ” and here the black eyes grew so dim with tears that the poor child couldn't see that the last knot was out.

Gulliver saw it, and, pushing up the door, flew from his prison with a glad cry ; and, hopping into Moppet's hand, looked into the little dark face with such grateful confidence that it cleared at once, and the brightest smile it had worn for months broke over it as the bird nestled its soft head against her cheek, saying gently, —

“ I'm your friend, dear ; I love you, and I never shall forget what you have done for me to-night. How can I thank you before I go ? ”

For a minute, Moppet could only hug the bird, and cry ; for these were the first kind words she had heard for a long time, and they went straight to her lonely little heart.

“ O my deary ! I'se paid by dem words, and I don't want no tanks. Jes lub me, and come sometimes to see me ef you can, it's so hard livin' in dis yere place. I don't tink I'll bar it long. I wish I was a bird to fly away, or a oyster safe in de mud, and free to do as I'se a mind.”

“ I wish you could go and live with Davy on the island ; he is so kind, so happy, and as free as the wind. Can't you get away, Moppet ? ” whispered Gulliver, longing to help this poor, friendless little soul. He told her

all his story ; and they agreed that he should fly at once to the island, and see if Dan was there ; if not, he was to come back, and Moppet would try to get some one to help find him. When this was done, Davy and Dan were to take Moppet, if they could, and make her happy on the island. Full of hope and joy, Gulliver said good-by, and spread his wings ; but, alas for the poor bird ! he was too weak to fly. For three days he had hardly eaten any thing, had found no salt water to bathe in, and had sat moping in the cage till his strength was all gone.

“What shall I do ? what shall I do ?” he cried, fluttering his feeble wings, and running to and fro in despair.

“Hush, birdie, I’ll take kere ob you till you’s fit to fly. I knows a nice, quiet little cove down yonder, where no one goes ; and dere you kin stay till you’s better. I’ll come and feed you, and you kin paddle, and rest, and try your wings, safe and free, honey.”

As Moppet spoke, she took Gulliver in her arms, and stole away in the dim light, over the hill, down to the lonely spot where nothing went but the winds and waves, the gulls, and little Moppet, when hard words and blows made heart and body ache. Here she left the bird, and, with a loving “Good-night,” crept home to her bed in the garret, feeling as rich as a queen, and much happier ; for she had done a kind thing, and made a friend.

Next day, a great storm came : the wind blew a hurricane, the rain poured, and the sea thundered on the coast. If he had been well, Gulliver wouldn’t have minded at all ; but, being sick and sad, he spent an anxious day, sitting in a cranny of the rock, thinking of Davy and Moppet. It was so rough, even in the cove, that he could neither swim nor fly, so feeble was he ; and could find no food but such trifles as he could pick

up among the rocks. At nightfall the storm raged fiercer than ever, and he gave up seeing Moppet ; for he was sure she wouldn't come through the pelting rain just to feed him. So he put his head under his wing, and tried to sleep ; but he was so wet and weak, so hungry and anxious, no sleep came.

"What has happened to Davy alone on the island all this while ? He will fall ill with loneliness and trouble ; the lamp won't be lighted, the ships will be wrecked, and many people will suffer. O Dan, Dan, if we could only find you, how happy we should be !"

As Gulliver spoke, a voice cried through the darkness,—

"Is you dere, honey?" and Moppet came climbing over the rocks, with a basket full of such bits as she could get. "Poor birdie, is you starvin'? Here, jes go at dis, and joy yerself. Dere's fish and tings I tink you'd like. How is you now, dear?"

"Better, Moppet ; but, it's so stormy, I can't get to Davy ; and I worry about him," began Gulliver, pecking away at his supper : but he stopped suddenly, for a faint sound came up from below, as if some one called, "Help, help!"

"Hi ! what's dat?" said Moppet, listening.

"Davy, Davy!" called the voice.

"It's Dan. Hurrah, we've found him !" and Gulliver dived off the rock so recklessly that he went splash into the water. But that didn't matter to him ; and he paddled away, like a little steamer with all the engines in full blast. Down by the seaside, between two stones, lay Dan, so bruised and hurt he couldn't move, and so faint with hunger and pain he could hardly speak. As soon as Gulliver called, Moppet scrambled down, and fed the poor

man with her scraps, brought him rain-water from a crev-
ice near by, and bound up his wounded head with her little
apron. Then Dan told them how his boat had been run
down by a ship in the fog ; how he was hurt, and cast
ashore in the lonely cove ; how he had lain there half
dead, for no one heard his shouts, and he couldn't move ;
how the storm brought him back to life, when he was al-
most gone, and the sound of Moppet's voice told him
help was near.

How glad they all were then ! Moppet danced for
joy ; Gulliver screamed and flapped his wings ; and Dan
smiled, in spite of pain, to think he should see Davy again.
He couldn't understand Gulliver ; but Moppet told him
all the story, and, when he heard it, he was more troubled
for the boy than for himself.

"What will he do ? He may get killed or scared, or
try to come ashore. Is the lamp alight ?" he cried, try-
ing to move, and falling back with a moan of pain.

Gulliver flew up to the highest rock, and looked out
across the dark sea. Yes, there it was,— the steady star
shining through the storm, and saying plainly, "All is
well."

"Thank heaven ! if the lamp is burning, Davy is alive.
Now, how shall I get to him ?" said Dan.

"Never you fret, massa : Moppet'll see to dat. You
jes lay still till I comes. Dere's folks in de house as'll
tend to you, ef I tells em who and where you is."

Off she ran, and soon came back with help. Dan was
taken to the house, and carefully tended ; Moppet wasn't
scolded for being out so late ; and, in the flurry, no one
thought of the gull. Next morning, the cage was found
blown over, and every one fancied the bird had flown
away. Dora was already tired of him ; so he was soon
forgotten by all but Moppet.

In the morning it was clear ; and Gulliver flew gladly to the tower where Davy still watched and waited, with a pale face and heavy heart, for the three days had been very hard to bear, and, but for Nep and Shine, he would have lost his courage entirely. Gulliver flew straight into his bosom, and, sitting there, told his adventures ; while Davy laughed and cried, and Nep stood by, wagging his tail for joy, while his eyes were full of sympathy. The three had a very happy hour together, and then came a boat to carry Davy ashore, while another keeper took charge of the light till Dan was well.

Nobody ever knew the best part of the story but Moppet, Davy, and Gulliver. Other people didn't dream that the boy's pet gull had any thing to do with the finding of the man, or the good fortune that came to Moppet. While Dan lay sick, she tended him, like a loving little daughter ; and, when he was well, he took her for his own. He did not mind the black skin : he only saw the loneliness of the child, the tender heart, the innocent, white soul ; and he was as glad to be a friend to her as if she had been as blithe and pretty as Dora.

It was a happy day when Dan and Davy, Moppet, Gulliver, and Nep sailed away to the island ; for that was still to be their home, with stout young Ben to help.

The sun was setting ; and they floated through waves as rosy as the rosy sky. A fresh wind filled the sail, and ruffled Gulliver's white breast as he sat on the mast-head crooning a cheery song to himself. Dan held the tiller, and Davy lay at his feet, with Nep bolt upright beside him ; but the happiest face of all was Moppet's. Kneeling at the bow, she leaned forward, with her lips apart, her fuzzy hair blown back, and her eyes fixed on the island which was to be her home. Like a little black figure-

head of Hope, she leaned and looked, as the boat flew on, bearing her away from the old life into the new.

As the sun sunk, out shone the lamp with sudden brightness, as if the island bade them welcome. Dan furled the sail ; and, drifting with the tide, they floated in, till the waves broke softly on the shore, and left them safe at home.



THE WHALE'S STORY.

FREDDY sat thinking on the seat under the trees. It was a wide, white seat, about four feet long, sloping from the sides to the middle, something like a swing ; and was not only comfortable but curious, for it was made of a whale's bone. Freddy often sat there, and thought about it ; for he was very much interested in it, and nobody could tell him any thing of it, except that it had been there a long time.

"Poor old whale, I wonder how you got here, where you came from, and if you were a good and happy creature while you lived," said Freddy, patting the old bone with his little hand.

It gave a great creak ; and a sudden gust of air stirred the trees, as if some monster groaned and sighed. Then Freddy heard a strange voice, very loud, yet cracked and queer, as if some one tried to talk with a broken jaw.

"Freddy ahoy !" called the big voice. "I'll tell you all about it ; for you are the only person who ever pitied me, or cared to know any thing about me."

"Why, can you talk ?" asked Freddy, very much astonished and a little frightened.

"Of course I can, for this is a part of my jaw-bone. I should talk better if my whole mouth was here ; but

I'm afraid my voice would then be so loud you wouldn't be able to hear it. I don't think any one but you would understand me, any way. It isn't every one that can, you know; but you are a thoughtful little chap, with a lively fancy as well as a kind heart, so you shall hear my story."

"Thank you, I should like it very much, if you would please to speak a little lower, and not sigh; for your voice almost stuns me, and your breath nearly blows me away," said Freddy.

"I'll try: but it's hard to suit my tone to such a mite, or to help groaning when I think of my sad fate; though I deserve it, perhaps," said the bone, more gently.

"Were you a naughty whale?" asked Freddy.

"I was proud, very proud, and foolish; and so I suffered for it. I dare say you know a good deal about us. I see you reading often, and you seem a sensible child."

"No: I haven't read about you yet, and I only know that you are the biggest fish there is," answered Freddy.

The bone creaked and shook, as if it was laughing, and said in a tone that showed it hadn't got over its pride yet,—

"You're wrong there, my dear: we are not fishes at all, though stupid mortals have called us so for a long time. We can't live without air; we have warm, red blood; and we don't lay eggs,—so we are *not* fishes. We certainly *are* the biggest creatures in the sea and out of it. Why, bless you! some of us are nearly a hundred feet long; our tails alone are fifteen or twenty feet wide; the biggest of us weigh five hundred thousand pounds, and have in them the fat, bone, and muscle of a thousand cattle. The lower jaw of one of my family

made an arch large enough for a man on horseback to ride under easily, and my cousins of the sperm-family usually yield eighty barrels of oil."

"Gracious me, what monsters you are!" cried Freddy, taking a long breath, while his eyes got bigger and bigger as he listened.

"Ah! you may well say so; we are a very wonderful and interesting family. All our branches are famous in one way or another. Fin-backs, sperms, and rights are the largest; then come the norwhals, the dolphins, and porpoises,—which last, I dare say, you've seen."

"Yes: but tell me about the big ones, please. Which were you?" cried Freddy.

"I was a Right whale, from Greenland. The Sperms live in warm places; but to us the torrid zone is like a sea of fire, and we don't pass it. Our cousins do; and go to the East Indies by way of the North Pole, which is more than your famous Parrys and Franklins could do."

"I don't know about that; but I'd like to hear what you eat, and how you live, and why you came here," said Freddy, who thought the whale rather inclined to boast.

"Well, we haven't got any teeth,—our branch of the family; and we live on creatures so small, that you could only see them with a microscope. Yes, you may stare; but it's true, my dear. The roofs of our mouths are made of whalebone, in broad pieces from six to eight feet long, arranged one against the other; so they make an immense sieve. The tongue, which makes about five barrels of oil, lies below, like a cushion of white satin. When we want to feed, we rush through the water, which is full of the little things we eat, and catch them in our sieve, spouting the water through two holes in our heads. Then we collect the food with our

tongue, and swallow it ; for, though we are so big, our throats are small. We roam about in the ocean, leaping and floating, feeding and spouting, flying from our enemies, or fighting bravely to defend our young ones."

"Have you got any enemies ? I shouldn't think you could have, you are so large," said Freddy.

"But we have, and many too, — three who attack us in the water, and several more that men use against us. The killer, the sword-fish, and the thrasher trouble us at home. The killer fastens to us, and won't be shaken off till he has worried us to death ; the sword-fish stabs us with his sword ; and the thrasher whips us to death with his own slender, but strong and heavy, body. Then, men harpoon us, shoot or entrap us ; and make us into oil and candles and seats, and stiffening for gowns and umbrellas," said the bone, in a tone of scorn.

Freddy laughed at the idea, and asked, "How about candles? I know about oil and seats and umbrellas ; but I thought candles were made of wax."

"I can't say much on that point : I only know that, when a sperm whale is killed, they make oil out of the fat part as they do of ours ; but the Sperms have a sort of cistern in their heads, full of stuff like cream, and rose-colored. They cut a hole in the skull, and dip it out ; and sometimes get sixteen or twenty barrels. This is made into what you call spermaceti candles. We don't have any such nonsense about us ; but the Sperms always were a light-headed set."

Here the bone laughed, in a cracked sort of roar, which sent Freddy flying off the seat on to the grass, where he stayed, laughing also, though he didn't see any joke.

"I beg your pardon, child. It isn't often that I laugh; for I've a heavy heart somewhere, and have known trouble enough to make me as sad as the sea is sometimes."

"Tell me about your troubles; I pity you very much, and like to hear you talk," said Freddy, kindly.

"Unfortunately we are very easily killed, in spite of our size; and have various afflictions besides death. We grow blind; our jaws are deformed sometimes; our tails, with which we swim, get hurt; and we have dyspepsia."

Freddy shouted at that; for he knew what dyspepsia was, because at the sea-side there were many sickly people who were always groaning about that disease.

"It's no laughing matter, I assure you," said the whale's bone. "We suffer a great deal, and get thin and weak and miserable. I've sometimes thought that's the reason we are blue."

"Perhaps, as you have no teeth, you don't chew your food enough, and so have dyspepsia, like an old gentleman I know," said Freddy.

"That's not the reason; my cousins, the Sperms, have teeth, and dyspepsia also."

"Are they blue?"

"No, black and white. But I was going to tell you my troubles. My father was harpooned when I was very young, and I remember how bravely he died. The Rights usually run away when they see a whaler coming; not from cowardice,—oh, dear, no!—but discretion. The Sperms stay and fight, and are killed off very fast; for they are a very headstrong family. We fight when we can't help it; and my father died like a hero. They chased him five hours before they stuck him; he tried to get

away, and dragged three or four boats and sixteen hundred fathoms of line from eight in the morning till four at night. Then they got out another line, and he towed the ship itself for more than an hour. There were fifteen harpoons in him: he chewed up a boat, pitched several men overboard, and damaged the vessel, before they killed him. Ah! he was a father to be proud of."

Freddy sat respectfully silent for a few minutes, as the old bone seemed to feel a good deal on the subject. Presently he went on again:—

"The Sperms live in herds; but the Rights go in pairs, and are very fond of one another. My wife was a charming creature, and we were very happy, till one sad day, when she was playing with our child,—a sweet little whaleling only twelve feet long, and weighing but a ton,—my son was harpooned. His mamma, instead of flying, wrapped her fins round him, and dived as far as the line allowed. Then she came up, and dashed at the boats in great rage and anguish, entirely regardless of the danger she was in. The men struck my son, in order to get her, and they soon succeeded; but even then, in spite of her suffering, she did not try to escape, but clung to little Spouter till both were killed. Alas! alas!"

Here the poor bone creaked so dismally, Freddy feared it would tumble to pieces, and bring the story to an end too soon.

"Don't think of those sorrowful things," he said; "tell me how you came to be here. Were you harpooned?"

"Not I; for I've been very careful all my life to keep out of the way of danger: I'm not like one of my relations, who attacked a ship, gave it such a dreadful blow that he made a great hole, the water rushed in, and the

vessel was a wreck. But he paid dearly for that prank ; for a few months afterward another ship harpooned him very easily, finding two spears still in him, and a wound in his head. I forgot to mention, that the Sperms have fine ivory teeth, and make ambergris,—a sort of stuff that smells very nice, and costs a great deal. I give you these little facts about my family, as you seem interested, and it's always well to improve the minds of young people."

" You are very kind ; but will you be good enough to tell about yourself ? " said Freddy again ; for the bone seemed to avoid that part of the story, as if he didn't want to tell it.

" Well, if I must, I must ; but I'm sorry to confess what a fool I've been. You know what coral is, don't you ? "

" No," said Freddy, wondering why it asked.

" Then I must tell you, I suppose. There is a bit in the house there,—that rough, white, stony stuff on the table in the parlor. It's full of little holes, you know. Well, those holes are the front doors of hundreds of little polypes, or coral worms, who build the great branches of coral, and live there. They are of various shapes and colors,—some like stars ; some fine as a thread, and blue or yellow ; others like snails and tiny lobsters. Some people say the real coral-makers are shaped like little oblong bags of jelly, closed at one end, the other open, with six or eight little feelers, like a star, all round it. The other creatures are boarders or visitors : these are the real workers, and, when they sit in their cells and put out their feelers, they make all manner of lovely colors under the water,—crimson, green, orange, and violet. But, if they are taken up or touched, the coral people go

in doors, and the beautiful hues disappear. They say there are many coral reefs and islands built by these industrious people, in the South Seas ; but I can't go there to see, and I am contented with those I find in the northern latitudes. I knew such a community of coral builders, and used to watch them long ago, when they began to work. It was a charming spot, down under the sea ; for all manner of lovely plants grew there; splendid fishes sailed to and fro ; wonderful shells lay about ; crimson and yellow prawns, long, gliding green worms, and purple sea-urchins, were there. When I asked the polypes what they were doing, and they answered, 'Building an island,' I laughed at them ; for the idea that these tiny, soft atoms could make any thing was ridiculous. 'You may roar ; but you'll see that we are right, if you live long enough,' said they. 'Our family have built thousands of islands and long reefs, that the sea can't get over, strong as it is.' That amused me immensely ; but I wouldn't believe it, and laughed more than ever."

"It does seem very strange," said Freddy, looking at the branch of coral which he had brought out to examine.

"Doesn't it? and isn't it hard to believe? I used to go, now and then, to see how the little fellows got on, and always found them hard at it. For a long while there was only a little plant without leaves, growing slowly taller and taller ; for they always built upward toward the light. By and by, the small shrub was a tree : flying-fish roosted in its branches ; sea-cows lay under its shadow ; and thousands of jolly little polypes lived and worked in its white chambers. I was glad to see them getting on so well ; but still I didn't believe in the island

story, and used to joke them about their ambition. They were very good-natured, and only answered me, ‘Wait a little longer, Friend Right.’ I had my own affairs to attend to ; so, for years at a time, I forgot the coral-workers, and spent most of my life up Greenland way, for warm climates don’t agree with my constitution. When I came back, after a long absence, I was astonished to see the tree grown into a large umbrella-shaped thing, rising above the water. Sea-weed had washed up and clung there ; sea-birds had made nests there ; land-birds and the winds had carried seeds there, which had sprung up ; trunks of trees had been cast there by the sea ; lizards, insects, and little animals came with the trees, and were the first inhabitants ; and, behold ! it *was* an island.”

“What did you say then ?” asked Freddy.

“I was angry, and didn’t want to own that I was wrong ; so I insisted that it wasn’t a real island, without people on it. ‘Wait a little longer,’ answered the polypes ; and went on, building broader and broader foundations. I flounced away in a rage, and didn’t go back for a great while. I hoped something would happen to the coral builders and their island ; but I was so curious that I couldn’t keep away, and, on going back there, I found a settlement of fishermen, and the beginning of a thriving town. Now I should have been in a towering passion at this, if in my travels I hadn’t discovered a race of little creatures as much smaller than polypes as a mouse is smaller than an elephant. I heard two learned men talking about diatoms, as they sailed to Labrador ; and I listened. They said these people lived in both salt and fresh water, and were found in all parts of the world. They were a glassy shell, hold-

ing a soft, golden-yellow substance, and that they were so countless that banks were made of them, and that a town here in these United States was founded on them. They were the food of many little sea-animals, who, in turn, fed us big creatures, and were very interesting and wonderful. I saved up this story ; and, when the polypes asked if they hadn't done what they intended, I told them I didn't think it so very remarkable, for the tiny diatoms made cities, and were far more astonishing animals than they. I thought that would silence them ; but they just turned round, and informed me that my diatoms were plants, not animals,—so my story was all humbug. Then I *was* mad ; and couldn't get over the fact that these little rascals had done what we, the kings of the sea, couldn't do. I wasn't content with being the biggest creature there : I wanted to be the most skilful also. I didn't remember that every thing has its own place and use, and should be happy in doing the work for which it was made. I fretted over the matter a long while, and at last decided to make an island myself."

"How could you ?" asked Freddy.

"I had my plans ; and thought them very wise ones. I was so bent on outdoing the polypes that I didn't much care what happened ; and so I went to work in my clumsy way. I couldn't pile up stones, or build millions of cells ; so I just made an island of myself. I swam up into the harbor yonder one night ; covered my back with sea-weed ; and lay still on the top of the water. In the morning the gulls came to see what it was, and pecked away at the weeds, telling me very soon that they knew what I was after, and that I couldn't gull them. All the people on shore turned out to see the wonder also ; for a fisherman had carried the tidings, and every one was wild

to behold the new island. After staring and chattering a long while, boats came off to examine the mystery. Loads of scientific gentlemen worked away at me with microscopes, hammers, acids, and all sorts of tests, to decide what I was ; and kept up such a fire of long words that I was 'most dead. They couldn't make up their minds ; and meanwhile news of the strange thing spread, and every sort of person came to see me. The gulls kept telling them the joke ; but they didn't understand, and I got on capitally. Every night I dined and fed and frolicked till dawn ; then put on my sea-weeds, and lay still to be stared at. I wanted some one to come and live on me ; then I should be equal to the island of the polypes. But no one came, and I was beginning to be tired of fooling people, when I was fooled myself. An old sailor came to visit me : he had been a whaler, and he soon guessed the secret. But he said nothing till he was safely out of danger ; then he got all ready, and one day, as I lay placidly in the sun, a horrible harpoon came flying through the air, and sunk deep into my back. I forgot every thing but the pain, and dived for my life. Alas ! the tide was low ; the harbor-bar couldn't be passed ; and I found hundreds of boats chasing me, till I was driven ashore down there on the flats. Big and strong as we are, once out of water, and we are perfectly helpless. I was soon despatched ; and my bones left to whiten on the sand. This was long ago ; and, one by one, all my relics have been carried off or washed away. My jaw-bone has been used as a seat here, till it's worn out ; but I couldn't crumble away till I'd told some one my story. Remember, child, pride goeth before a fall."

Then, with a great creak, the bone tumbled to pieces ; and found a peaceful grave in the long green grass.

GOLDFIN AND SILVERTAIL.

LITTLE Bessie lay in a rocky nook,
Alone, beside the sea,
Where the sound of ever-rolling waves
To her ear came pleasantly.
Her face was dark with a gloomy frown,
Tears on her hot cheek lay ;
For a wilful, unkind little girl
She had been that livelong day ;
And had stolen here, to the quiet shore,
To sigh and sob alone,
And to wonder how and why and where
Her happiness all had flown.
As thus she lay, with half-closed eyes,
Low voices reached her ear,
And laughter gay that seemed to flow
Like ripples sweet and clear.
She looked above, she looked below
And saw with wondering glee
Two little mermaids on the rocks,
Both singing merrily.
One combed her long and shining hair,
All wreathed with sea-weed bright ;
The other caught the falling spray
That leaped into the light.
Friendly and fair both faces seemed,
With smiling lips and eyes,
And little arms and bosoms white
As sea-foam when it flies.

But Bessie wondered more and more,
And Bessie's cheek grew pale ;
For both the mermaids bore below
A graceful little tail, —
One, bright with silver scales, that shone
In every fin and fold ;
The other, brighter, stranger still,
All glittering with gold.
“ Come hither, little mermaids, pray,”
Cried Bessie, from her nook,
“ I will not touch or trouble you, —
I only want to look.”
The startled mermaids glanced at her,
And whispered long and low ;
At last, one to the other said,
“ Dear Goldfin, let us go.”
Then, gliding from their rocky seat,
And floating through the sea,
They reached the nook where Bessie lay,
And looked up smilingly :
“ Now, ask of us whate'er you will,
We'll surely grant it thee,”
Bright Goldfin said unto the child,
Who watched them silently.
And Bessie answered with delight,
“ You seem so blithe and gay,
And I'm so sad and lonely here,
Make me a mermaid, pray.”
“ Ah ! choose again : that is not wise,”
Cried Goldfin, earnestly ;
“ I have no spell to change your heart,
And sadder it may be.
Our home is strange and wild to you ;
Think what you leave behind, —
Sunshine and home, and, best of all,
A mother, dear and kind.”
But Bessie only frowned and cried,
“ You gave the choice to me.
I'm tired of sun and home and all,
So a mermaid I will be.”

Then bitter, salt sea-drops they gave,
From out a hollow shell ;
And garlands fair upon her head,
They laid, with song and spell.
A cloud arose, like sudden mist ;
And, when it passed, the child
Found herself, by drop and garland,
Changed to a mermaid wild.
With timid haste she glided down
Into the cold, cold sea ;
And bid her playmates show her where
Her future home would be.
Down deep into the ocean went
The mermaids, one and all,
O'er many a wondrous hill and dale,
Through many a coral hall.
The child's heart in the mermaid's form
Beat fast with sudden fear ;
For all was gloomy, strange, and dim
Beneath the waters clear.
She missed the blessed air of heaven ;
She missed the cheerful light,
She feared the monsters weird, who looked
From caverns dark as night ;
Her food was now sea-apples cold,
And bitter spray she drank ;
Her bed was made on barren rocks,
Of sea-moss, rough and dank ;
Strange creatures floated far and near,
Or crawled upon the sand ;
And soon she longed with all her heart
For the green, summery land.
Here Bessie lived ; but daily grew
More restless than before,
And sighed to be a child again, —
Safe on the pleasant shore.
She often rose up to the light,
A human voice to hear ;
And look upon her happy home, —
That now seemed very dear.

And children, wandering on the sands,
Saw, rising from the sea,
A little hand that beckoned them,
As if imploringly.
They often saw a wistful face
Look through the spray and foam ;
And heard a sobbing voice that cried,
“ O mother ! take me home.”
So, drearily, poor Bessie lived,
Till to a merman old,
She one day went, when most forlorn,
And all her sorrow told.
“ If you would find your happiness,”
The merman answering said,
“ Forget yourself, and patiently
Cheer others’ grief instead.
Watch well the lives of your two friends,
The simple difference see ;
And you will need no other help,—
No other spell from me.”
Then Bessie watched with heedful eyes,
Wondering more and more,
That she had never cared to mark
That difference before ;
For Silvertail, though fair to see,
Was wilful, rude, and wild.
“ Ah ! yes,” sighed Bessie, while she looked,
“ As I was, when a child.”
She led an idle, selfish life,
Darkeened by discontent ;
And left a shadow or a tear
Behind, where’er she went.
But Goldfin, with her loving heart,
So cheerful and serene,
Left smiles, kind words, and happy thoughts
Wherever *she* had been.
No little fish but came to her
To heal its wounded fin ;
No monster grim but opened wide
His cave to let her in.

The rough waves grew more mild to her,
Though cruel to great ships ;
The sea-gulls stooped in their wild flights,
To kiss her smiling lips.
She helped the coral builders small
To shape their little cells,
And in the diver's dangerous path
Laid heaps of pearly shells ;
She guided well the fisher-boats
Through many a stormy gale,
And lured away the angry winds
From many a tattered sail ;
She scattered pebbles on the beach,
And sea-weed on the sands,
To gladden children's longing eyes,
And fill their little hands.
These things she did with patient care,
Forgetful of herself,
Till in the sea she was more loved
Than mermaid, sprite, or elf ;
While all the joy to others given
Came back unconsciously,
To cheer and brighten her own life,
Wherever she might be.
“ Ah ! now I know why I am sad,”
Cried Bessie, at the sight,
“ When I am good, as Goldfin is,
My heart will be as light.”
And henceforth Bessie daily grew
More cheerful and content :
In generous acts and friendly words
Her happy days were spent.
No longer lonely seemed the sea,
So full of friends it grew ;
Nor longer gloomy, for the sun
Shone through the waters blue.
No more she wept beside the shore,
But floated daily there ;
And hung gay garlands on the rocks,
That once were brown and bare,

Softly singing, as she looked
With dim eyes through the foam :
“ When I have learned my lesson well,
I may be taken home.
Till I can rule my heart aright,
And conquer my own will,
I’ll wait and work and hope and try.
Dear mother, love me still.”
As thus the little mermaid cried,
There came a sudden gleam ;
A cold drop fell upon her cheek,
And chased away the dream.
With wondering eyes did Bessie gaze
About on every side, —
The rocks whereon the mermaids sat
Were covered by the tide ;
The great waves, with a solemn sound,
Came rolling slowly on ;
The fresh winds played among her hair ;
And all the dream was gone.
But Bessie long remembered it :
The lesson did not fail ;
And all her life she followed well
Goldfin, not Silvertail.



A STRANGE ISLAND.

ONE day I lay rocking in my boat, reading a very famous book, which all children know and love ; and the name of which I'll tell you by and by. So busily was I reading, that I never minded the tide ; and presently discovered that I was floating out to sea, with neither sail nor oar. At first I was very much frightened ; for there was no one in sight on land or sea, and I didn't know where I might drift to. But the water was calm, the sky clear, and the wind blew balmily ; so I waited for what should happen.

Presently I saw a speck on the sea, and eagerly watched it ; for it drew rapidly near, and seemed to be going my way. When it came closer, I was much amazed ; for, of all the queer boats I ever saw, this was the queerest. It was a great wooden bowl, very cracked and old ; and in it sat three gray-headed little gentlemen with spectacles, all reading busily, and letting the boat go where it pleased. Now, right in their way was a rock ; and I called out, "Sir, sir, take care."

But my call came too late : crash went the bowl, out came the bottom, and down plumped all the little gentlemen into the sea. I tried not to laugh, as the books, wigs, and spectacles flew about ; and, urging my boat

nearer, I managed to fish them up, dripping and sneezing, and looking like drowned kittens. When the flurry was over, and they had got their breath, I asked who they were, and where they were going.

"We are from Gotham, ma'am," said the fattest one, wiping a very wet face on a very wet handkerchief. "We were going to that island yonder. We have often tried, but never got there: it's always so, and I begin to think the thing can't be done."

I looked where he pointed; and, sure enough, there was an island where I had never seen one before. I rubbed my eyes, and looked again. Yes: there it was,—a little island, with trees and people on it; for I saw smoke coming out of the chimney of a queerly-shaped house on the shore.

"What is the name of it?" I asked.

The little old gentleman put his finger on his lips, and said, with a mysterious nod,—

"I couldn't tell you, ma'am. It's a secret; but, if you manage to land there, you will soon know."

The other old men nodded at the same time; and then all went to reading again, with the water still dropping off the ends of their noses. This made me very curious; and, as the tide drifted us nearer and nearer, I looked well about me, and saw several things that filled me with a strong desire to land on the island. The odd house, I found, was built like a high-heeled shoe; and at every window I saw children's heads. Some were eating broth; some were crying; and some had nightcaps on. I caught sight of a distracted old lady flying about, with a ladle in one hand, and a rod in the other; but the house was so full of children (even up to the skylight,—out of which they popped their heads, and nodded at me) that I

couldn't see much of the mamma of this large family : one seldom can, you know.

I had hardly got over my surprise at this queer sight, when I saw a cow fly up through the air, over the new moon that hung there, and come down and disappear in the woods. I really didn't know what to make of this, but had no time to ask the old men what it meant ; for a cat, playing a fiddle, was seen on the shore. A little dog stood by, listening and laughing ; while a dish and a spoon ran away over the beach with all their might. If the boat had not floated up to the land, I think I should have swam there,—I was so anxious to see what was going on ; for there was a great racket on the island, and such a remarkable collection of creatures, it was impossible to help staring.

As soon as we landed, three other gentlemen came to welcome the ones I had saved, and seemed very glad to see them. They appeared to have just landed from a tub in which was a drum, rub-a-dub-dubbing all by itself. One of the new men had a white frock on, and carried a large knife ; the second had dough on his hands, flour on his coat, and a hot-looking face ; the third was very greasy, had a bundle of candles under his arm, and a ball of wicking half out of his pocket. The six shook hands, and walked away together, talking about a fair ; and left me to take care of myself.

I walked on through a pleasant meadow, where a pretty little girl was looking sadly up at a row of sheep's tails hung on a tree. I also saw a little boy in blue, asleep by a hay-cock ; and another boy taking aim at a cock-sparrow, who clapped his wings and flew away. Presently I saw two more little girls : one sat by a fire warming her toes ; and, when I asked what her name was, she said pleasantly,—

"Polly Flinders, ma'am."

The other one sat on a tuft of grass, eating something that looked very nice ; but, all of a sudden, she dropped her bowl, and ran away, looking very much frightened.

"What's the matter with her?" I asked of a gay young frog who came tripping along with his hat under his arm.

"Miss Muffit is a fashionable lady, and afraid of spiders, madam ; also of frogs." And he puffed himself angrily up, till his eyes quite goggled in his head.

"And, pray, who are you, sir?" I asked, staring at his white vest, green coat, and fine cravat.

"Excuse me, if I don't give my name, ma'am. My false friend, the rat, got me into a sad scrape once ; and Rowley insists upon it that a duck destroyed me, which is all gammon, ma'am,—all gammon."

With that, the frog skipped away ; and I turned into a narrow lane, which seemed to lead toward some music. I had not gone far, when I heard the rumbling of a wheelbarrow, and saw a little man wheeling a little woman along. The little man looked very hot and tired ; but the little woman looked very nice, in a smart bonnet and shawl, and kept looking at a new gold ring on her finger, as she rode along under her little umbrella. I was wondering who they were, when down went the wheelbarrow ; and the little lady screamed so dismally that I ran away, lest I should get into trouble,—being a stranger.

Turning a corner, I came upon a very charming scene, and slipped into a quiet nook to see what was going on. It was evidently a wedding ; and I was just in time to see it, for the procession was passing at that moment. First came a splendid cock-a-doodle, all in

black and gold, like a herald, blowing his trumpet, and marching with a very dignified step. Then came a rook, in black, like a minister, with spectacles and white cravat. A lark and bullfinch followed,—friends, I supposed; and then the bride and bridegroom. Miss Wren was evidently a Quakeress; for she wore a sober dress, and a little white veil, through which her bright eyes shone. The bridegroom was a military man, in his scarlet uniform,—a plump, bold-looking bird, very happy and proud just then. A goldfinch gave away the bride, and a linnet was bridemaid. The ceremony was very fine; and, as soon as it was over, the blackbird, thrush, and nightingale burst out in a lovely song.

A splendid dinner followed, at which was nearly every bird that flies; so you may imagine the music there was. They had currant-pie in abundance; and cherry-wine, which excited a cuckoo so much, that he became quite rude, and so far forgot himself as to pull the bride about. This made the groom so angry that he begged his friend, the sparrow, to bring his bow and arrow, and punish the ruffian. But, alas! Sparrow had also taken a drop too much: he aimed wrong, and, with a dreadful cry, Mr. Robin sank dying into the arms of his wife, little Jane.

It was too much for me; and, taking advantage of the confusion that followed, I left the tragical scene as fast as possible.

A little farther on, I was shocked to see a goose dragging an old man down some steps that led to a little house.

“ Dear me! what’s the matter here? ” I cried.

“ He won’t say his prayers,” screamed the goose.

“ But perhaps he was never taught,” said I.

"It's never too late to learn : he's had his chance ; he won't be pious and good, so away with him. Don't interfere, whatever you do : hold your tongue, and go about your business," scolded the goose, who certainly had a dreadful temper.

I dared say no more ; and, when the poor old man had been driven away by this foul proceeding, I went up the steps and peeped in ; for I heard some one crying, and thought the cross bird, perhaps, had hurt some one else. A little old woman stood there, wringing her hands in great distress ; while a small dog was barking at her with all his might.

"Bless me ! the fashions have got even here," thought I ; for the old woman was dressed in the latest style,—or, rather, she had overdone it sadly ; for her gown was nearly up to her knees, and she was nearly as ridiculous an object as some of the young ladies I had seen at home. She had a respectable bonnet on, however, instead of a straw saucer ; and her hair was neatly put under a cap,—not made into a knob on the top of her head.

"My dear soul, what's the trouble?" said I, quite touched by her tears.

"Lud a mercy, ma'am ! I've been to market with my butter and eggs,—for the price of both is so high, one can soon get rich now-a-days,—and, being tired, I stopped to rest a bit, but fell asleep by the road. Somebody—I think it's a rogue of a peddler who sold me wooden nutmegs, and a clock that wouldn't go, and some pans that came to bits the first time I used them—somebody cut my new gown and petticoat off all round, in the shameful way you see. I thought I never should get home ; for I was such a fright, I actually didn't

know myself. But, thinks I, my doggy will know me ; and then I shall be sure I'm I, and not some bold-faced creature in short skirts. But, oh, ma'am ! doggy *don't* know me ; and I ain't myself, and I don't know what to do."

" He's a foolish little beast ; so don't mind him, but have a cup of tea, and go to bed. You can make your gown decent to-morrow ; and, if I see the tricksy pedler, I'll give him a scolding."

This seemed to comfort the old woman ; though doggy still barked.

" My next neighbor has a dog who never behaves in this way," she said, as she put her teapot on the coals. " He's a remarkable beast ; and you'd better stop to see him as you pass, ma'am. He's always up to some funny prank or other."

I said I would ; and, as I went by the next house, I took a look in at the window. The closet was empty, I observed ; but the dog sat smoking a pipe, looking as grave as a judge.

" Where is your mistress ? " asked I.

" Gone for some tripe," answered the dog, politely taking the pipe out of his mouth, and adding, " I hope the smoke doesn't annoy you."

" I don't approve of smoking," said I.

" Sorry to hear it," said the dog, coolly.

I was going to lecture him on this bad habit ; but I saw his mistress coming with a dish in her hand, and, fearing she might think me rude to peep in at her windows, I walked on, wondering what we were coming to when even four-legged puppies smoked.

At the door of the next little house, I saw a market-wagon loaded with vegetables, and a smart young pig

just driving it away. I had heard of this interesting family, and took a look as I passed by. A second tidy pig sat blowing the fire ; and a third was eating roast-beef, as if he had just come in from his work. The fourth, I was grieved to see, looked very sulky ; for it was evident he had been naughty, and so lost his dinner. The little pig was at the door, crying to get in ; and it was sweet to see how kindly the others let him in, wiped his tears, tied on his bib, and brought him his bread and milk. I was very glad to see these young orphans doing so well, and I knew my friends at home would enjoy hearing from them.

A loud scream made me jump ; and the sudden splash of water made me run along, without stopping to pick up a boy and girl who came tumbling down the hill, with an empty pail, bumping their heads as they rolled. Smelling something nice, and feeling hungry, I stepped into a large room near by,— a sort of eating-house, I fancy ; for various parties seemed to be enjoying themselves in their different ways. A small boy sat near the door, eating a large pie ; and he gave me a fine plum which he had just pulled out. At one table was a fat gentleman cutting another pie, which had a dark crust, through which appeared the heads of a flock of birds, all singing gayly.

“ There’s no end to the improvements in cooking, and no accounting for tastes,” I added, looking at a handsomely-dressed lady, who sat near, eating bread and honey.

As I passed this party, I saw behind the lady’s chair a maid, with a clothes-pin in her hand, and no nose. She sobbingly told me a bird had nipped it off ; and I gave her a bit of court-plaster, which I fortunately had in my pocket.

Another couple were dividing their meat in a queer way ; for one took all the fat, and the other all the lean. The next people were odder still ; for the man looked rather guilty, and seemed to be hiding a three-peck measure under his chair, while he waited for his wife to bring on some cold barley-pudding, which, to my surprise, she was frying herself. I also saw a queer moonstruck-looking man inquiring the way to Norridge ; and another man making wry faces over some plum-pudding, with which he had burnt his mouth, because his friend came down too soon.

I ordered pease-porridge hot, and they brought it cold ; but I didn't wait for any thing else, being in a hurry to see all there was to be seen on this strange island. Feeling refreshed, I strolled on, passing a jolly old gentleman smoking and drinking, while three fiddlers played before him. As I turned into a road that led toward a hill, a little boy, riding a dapple-gray pony, and an old lady on a white horse, with bells ringing somewhere, trotted by me, followed by a little girl, who wished to know where she could buy a penny bun. I told her the best were at Newmarch's, in Bedford Street, and she ran on, much pleased ; but I'm afraid she never found that best of bake-shops. I was going quietly along, when the sound of another horse coming made me look round ; and there I saw a dreadful sight,—a wild horse, tearing over the ground, with fiery eyes and streaming tail. On his back sat a crazy man, beating him with a broom ; a crazy woman was behind him, with her bonnet on wrong side before, holding one crazy child in her lap, while another stood on the horse ; a third was hanging on by one foot, and all were howling at the top of their voices as they rushed by. I scrambled over the wall to get out of the way,

and there I saw more curious sights. Two blind men were sitting on the grass, trying to see two lame men who were hobbling along as hard as they could ; and, near by, a bull was fighting a bee in the most violent manner. This rather alarmed me ; and I scrambled back into the road again, just as a very fine lady jumped over a barberry-bush near by, and a gentleman went flying after, with a ring in one hand and a stick in the other.

"What very odd people they have here!" I thought. Close by was a tidy little house under the hill, and in it a tidy little woman who sold things to eat. Being rather hungry, in spite of my porridge, I bought a baked apple and a cranberry-pie ; for she said they were good, and I found she told the truth. As I sat eating my pie, some dogs began to bark ; and by came a troop of beggars, some in rags, and some in old velvet gowns. A drunken grenadier was with them, who wanted a pot of beer ; but as he had no money, the old woman sent him about his business.

On my way up the hill, I saw a little boy crying over a dead pig, and his sister, who seemed to be dead also. I asked his name, and he sobbed out, "Johnny Pringle, ma'am ;" and went on crying so hard I could do nothing to comfort him. While I stood talking to him, a sudden gust of wind blew up the road, and down came the bough of a tree ; and, to my surprise, a cradle with a baby in it also. The baby screamed dreadfully, and I didn't know how to quiet it ; so I ran back to the old woman, and left it with her, asking if that was the way babies were taken care of there.

"Bless you, my dear! its ma is making patty-cakes ; and put it up there to be out of the way of Tom Tinker's dog. I'll soon hush it up," said the old woman ; and, trotting it on her knee, she began to sing, —

“ Hey ! my kitten, my kitten,
Hey ! my kitten, my deary.”

Feeling that the child was in good hands, I hurried away ; for I saw something was going on upon the hill-top. When I got to the hill-top, I was shocked to find some people tossing an old woman in a blanket. I begged them to stop ; but one of the men, who, I found, was a Welchman, by the name of Taffy, told me the old lady liked it.

“ But why does she like it ? ” I asked in great surprise.

“ Tom, the piper’s son, will tell you : it’s my turn to toss now,” said the man.

“ Why, you see, ma’am,” said Tom, “ she is one of those dreadfully nice old women, who are always fussing and scrubbing, and worrying people to death, with everlastingly cleaning house. Now and then we get so tired out with her that we propose to her to clean the sky itself. She likes that ; and, as this is the only way we can get her up, we toss till she sticks somewhere, and then leave her to sweep cobwebs till she is ready to come back and behave herself.”

“ Well, that is the oddest thing I ever heard. I know just such an old lady, and when I go home I’ll try your plan. It seems to me that you have a great many queer old ladies on this island,” I said to another man, whom they called Peter, and who stood eating pumpkin all the time.

“ Well, we do have rather a nice collection ; but you haven’t seen the best of all. We expect her every minute ; and Margery Daw is to let us know the minute she lights on the island,” replied Peter, with his mouth full.

“ Lights ? ” said I, “ you speak as if she flew.”

"She rides on a bird. Hurrah! the old sweeper has lit. Now the cobwebs will fly. Don't hurry back," shouted the man; and a faint, far-off voice answered, "I shall be back again by and by."

The people folded up the blanket, looking much relieved; and I was examining a very odd house which was built by an ancient king called Boggen, when Margery Daw, a dirty little girl, came up the hill, screaming, at the top of her voice,—

"She's come! she's come!"

Every one looked up; and I saw a large white bird slowly flying over the island. On its back sat the nicest old woman that ever was seen: all the others were nothing compared to her. She had a pointed hat on over her cap, a red cloak, high-heeled shoes, and a crutch in her hand. She smiled and nodded as the bird approached; and every one ran and nodded, and screamed, "Welcome! welcome, mother!"

As soon as she touched the ground, she was so surrounded that I could only see the top of her hat; for hundreds and hundreds of little children suddenly appeared, like a great flock of birds,—rosy, happy, pretty children; but all looked unreal, and among them I saw some who looked like little people I had known long ago.

"Who are they?" I asked of a bonny lass, who was sitting on a cushion, eating strawberries and cream.

"They are the phantoms of all the little people who ever read and loved our mother's songs," said the maid.

"What did she write?" I asked, feeling very queer, and as if I was going to remember something.

"Songs that are immortal; and you have them in your hand," replied the bonny maid, smiling at my stupidity.

I looked; and there, on the cover of the book I had

been reading so busily when the tide carried me away, I saw the words, "Mother Goose's Melodies." I was so delighted that I had seen her I gave a shout, and tried to get near enough to hug and kiss the dear old soul, as the swarm of children were doing ; but my cry woke me, and I was *so* sorry to find it all a dream !



PEEP! PEEP! PEEP!

OH ! merry is the life
 Of a beach-bird free,
Dwelling by the side
 Of the sounding sea,—
Where the little children
 Chase us as we go ;
Where the pretty shells
 Murmur sweet and low ;
Where the old folk sit,
 Basking in the sun ;
Where the fisher-folk
 Rest when work is done.
“Peep ! Peep ! Peep !” we say,
 Tripping to and fro
On the pebbly shore,
 Where the ripples flow.

Oh ! merry is the life
 Of a beach-bird free,
Building our nests
 By the sounding sea,
Seeking daily food,
 And feeding with care
The dear little ones
 Safely hidden there,
Teaching them to fly
 Boldly o'er the sea,—
On the weak wings they
 Flutter timidly.

“Peep ! Peep ! Peep !” we say,
 Brooding there on high,—
 Sea-weed beneath us.
 Above us the sky.

Oh ! happy is the life
 Of a beach-bird free,
 Playing our blithe games
 By the sounding sea.
 High o'er the billows,
 In gay flocks we sail,
 Kissed by the cool spray,
 Ruffled by the gale,
 Watching the great ships
 As onward they glide,
 Like white-winged birds,
 O'er the restless tide.
 “Peep ! Peep ! Peep !” we say,
 Dancing in the sun,
 Where no harm can reach
 From storm, dog, or gun.

Oh ! merry is the life
 Of a beach-bird free ;
 Few griefs molest us
 By the sounding sea.
 If rude winds destroy
 Our nests built with care,
 Patiently we work
 The loss to repair ;
 If chilled by the gust,
 Or wet by the rain,
 We do not fret, but
 Wait for sun again.
 “Peep ! Peep ! Peep !” we say,
 Where'er we may be ;
 Which means, little child,
 “Hurrah for the sea !”

FANCY'S FRIEND.

IT was a wagon, shaped like a great square basket, on low wheels, and drawn by a stout donkey. There was one seat, on which Miss Fairbairn the governess sat ; and all round her, leaning over the edge of the basket, were children, with little wooden shovels and baskets in their hands, going down to play on the beach. Away they went, over the common, through the stony lane, out upon the wide, smooth sands. All the children but one immediately fell to digging holes, and making ponds, castles, or forts. They did this every day, and were never tired of it ; but little Fancy made new games for herself, and seldom dug in the sand. She had a garden of sea-weed, which the waves watered every day : she had a palace of pretty shells, where she kept all sorts of little water-creatures as fairy tenants ; she had friends and playmates among the gulls and peeps, and learned curious things by watching crabs, horseshoes, and jelly-fishes ; and every day she looked for a mermaid.

It was of no use to tell her that there were no mermaids : Fancy firmly believed in them, and was sure she would see one some day. The other children called the seals mermaids ; and were contented with the queer, shiny creatures who played in the water, lay on the

rocks, and peeped at them with soft, bright eyes as they sailed by. Fancy was not satisfied with seals,—they were not pretty and graceful enough for her,—and she waited and watched for a real mermaid. On this day she took a breezy run with the beach-birds along the shore; she planted a pretty red weed in her garden; and let out the water-beetles and snails who had passed the night in her palace. Then she went to a rock that stood near the quiet nook where she played alone, and sat there looking for a mermaid as the tide came in; for it brought her many curious things, and it might perhaps bring a mermaid.

As she looked across the waves that came tumbling one over the other, she saw something that was neither boat nor buoy nor seal. It was a queer-looking thing, with a wild head, a long waving tail, and something like arms that seemed to paddle it along. The waves tumbled it about, so Fancy could not see very well: but, the longer she looked, the surer she was that this curious thing was a mermaid; and she waited eagerly for it to reach the shore. Nearer and nearer it came, till a great wave threw it upon the sand; and Fancy saw that it was only a long piece of kelp, torn up by the roots. She was very much disappointed; but, all of a sudden, her face cleared up, she clapped her hands, and began to dance round the kelp, saying,—

“I'll make a mermaid myself, since none will come to me.”

Away she ran, higher up the beach, and, after thinking a minute, began her work. Choosing a smooth, hard place, she drew with a stick the outline of her mermaid; then she made the hair of the brown marsh-grass growing near by, arranging it in long locks on either

side the face, which was made of her prettiest pink and white shells,—for she pulled down her palace to get them. The eyes were two gray pebbles; the neck and arms of larger, white shells; and the dress of sea-weed,—red, green, purple, and yellow; very splendid, for Fancy emptied her garden to dress her mermaid.

“People say that mermaids always have tails; and I might make one out of this great leaf of kelp. But it isn’t pretty, and I don’t like it; for I want mine to be beautiful: so I won’t have any tail,” said Fancy, and put two slender white shells for feet, at the lower edge of the fringed skirt. She laid a wreath of little star-fish across the brown hair, a belt of small orange-crabs round the waist, buttoned the dress with violet snail-shells, and hung a tiny white pebble, like a pearl, in either ear.

“Now she must have a glass and a comb in her hand, as the song says, and then she will be done,” said Fancy, looking about her, well pleased.

Presently she found the skeleton of a little fish, and his backbone made an excellent comb; while a transparent jelly-fish served for a glass, with a frame of cockle-shells round it. Placing these in the hands of her mermaid, and some red coral bracelets on her wrists, Fancy pronounced her done; and danced about her, singing,—

“ My pretty little mermaid,
Oh! come, and play with me:
I’ll love you, I’ll welcome you;
And happy we shall be.”

Now, while she had been working, the tide had crept higher and higher; and, as she sung, one wave ran up and wet her feet.

“Oh, what a pity I didn’t put her farther up!” cried

Fancy ; "the tide will wash her all away ; and I meant to keep her fresh, and show her to Aunt Fiction. My poor mermaid !—I shall lose her ; but perhaps she will be happier in the sea : so I'll let her go."

Mounting her rock, Fancy waited to see her work destroyed. But the sea seemed to pity her ; and wave after wave came up, without doing any harm. At last one broke quite over the mermaid, and Fancy thought that would be the end of her. But, no ; instead of scattering shells, stones, and weeds, the wave lifted the whole figure, without displacing any thing, and gently bore it back into the sea.

"Good by ! good by !" cried Fancy, as the little figure floated away ; then, as it disappeared, she put her hands before her face,—for she loved her mermaid, and had given all her treasures to adorn her ; and now to lose her so soon seemed hard,—and Fancy's eyes were full of tears. Another great wave came rolling in ; but she did not look up to see it break, and, a minute after, she heard steps tripping toward her over the sand. Still she did not stir ; for, just then, none of her playmates could take the place of her new friend, and she didn't want to see them.

"Fancy ! Fancy !" called a breezy voice, sweeter than any she had ever heard. But she did not raise her head, nor care to know who called. The steps came quite close ; and the touch of a cold, wet hand fell on her own. Then she looked up, and saw a strange little girl standing by her, who smiled, showing teeth like little pearls, and said, in the breezy voice,—

" You wanted me to play with you, so I came."

" Who are you ?" asked Fancy, wondering where she had seen the child before.

" I'm your mermaid," said the child.

"But the water carried her away," cried Fancy.

"The waves only carried me out for the sea to give me life, and then brought me back to you," answered the new comer.

"But are you really a mermaid?" asked Fancy, beginning to smile and believe.

"I am really the one you made: look, and see if I'm not;" and the little creature turned slowly round, that Fancy might be sure it was her own work.

She certainly was very like the figure that once lay on the sand,—only she was not now made of stones and shells. There was the long brown hair blowing about her face, with a wreath of starry shells in it. Her eyes were gray, her cheeks and lips rosy, her neck and arms white; and from under her striped dress peeped little bare feet. She had pearls in her ears, coral bracelets, a golden belt, and a glass and comb in her hands.

"Yes," said Fancy, drawing near, "you *are* my little mermaid; but how does it happen that you come to me at last?"

"Dear friend," answered the water-child, "you believed in me, watched and waited long for me, shaped the image of the thing you wanted out of your dearest treasures, and promised to love and welcome me. I could not help coming; and the sea, that is as fond of you as you are of it, helped me to grant your wish."

"Oh, I'm glad, I'm glad! Dear little mermaid, what is your name?" cried Fancy, kissing the cool cheek of her new friend, and putting her arms about her neck.

"Call me by my German cousin's pretty name,—Lorelei," answered the mermaid, kissing back as warmly as she could.

"Will you come home and live with me, dear Lorelei?" asked Fancy, still holding her fast.

"If you will promise to tell no one who and what I am, I will stay with you as long as you love and believe in me. As soon as you betray me, or lose your faith and fondness, I shall vanish, never to come back again," answered Lorelei.

"I promise ; but won't people wonder who you are ? and, if they ask me, what shall I say ?" said Fancy.

"Tell them you found me on the shore ; and leave the rest to me. But you must not expect other people to like and believe in me as you do. They will say hard things of me ; will blame you for loving me ; and try to part us. Can you bear this, and keep your promise faithfully ?"

"I think I can. But why won't they like you ?" said Fancy, looking troubled.

"Because they are not like you, dear," answered the mermaid, with salt tears in her soft eyes. "They have not your power of seeing beauty in all things, of enjoying invisible delights, and living in a world of your own. Your Aunt Fiction will like me ; but your Uncle Fact won't. He will want to know all about me ; will think I'm a little vagabond ; and want me to be sent away somewhere, to be made like other children. I shall keep out of his way as much as I can ; for I'm afraid of him."

"I'll take care of you, Lorelei dear ; and no one shall trouble you. I hear Miss Fairbairn calling ; so I must go. Give me your hand, and don't be afraid."

Hand in hand the two went toward the other children, who stopped digging, and stared at the new child. Miss Fairbairn, who was very wise and good, but rather prim, stared too, and said, with surprise, —

"Why, my dear, where did you find that queer child ?"

"Down on the beach. Isn't she pretty?" answered Fancy, feeling very proud of her new friend.

"She hasn't got any shoes on; so she's a beggar, and we musn't play with her," said one boy, who had been taught that to be poor was a very dreadful thing.

"What pretty earrings and bracelets she's got!" said a little girl, who thought a great deal of her dress.

"She don't look as if she knew much," said another child, who was kept studying so hard that she never had time to dig and run, and make dirt-pies, till she fell ill, and had to be sent to the sea-side.

"What's your name? and who are your parents?" asked Miss Fairbairn.

"I've got no parents; and my name is Lorelei," answered the mermaiden.

"You mean Luly; mind your pronunciation, child," said Miss Fairbairn, who corrected every one she met in something or other. "Where do you live?"

"I havn't got any home now," said Lorelei, smiling at the lady's tone.

"Yes, you have: my home is yours; and you are going to stay with me always," cried Fancy heartily. "She is my little sister, Miss Fairbairn: I found her; and I'm going to keep her, and make her happy."

"Your uncle won't like it, my dear." And Miss Fairbairn shook her head gravely.

"Aunt will; and Uncle won't mind, if I learn my lessons well, and remember the multiplication table all right. He was going to give me some money, so I might learn to keep accounts; but I'll tell him to keep the money, and let me have Lorelei instead."

"Oh, how silly!" cried the boy who didn't like bare feet.

"No, she isn't ; for, if she's kind to the girl, maybe she'll get some of her pretty things," said the vain little girl.

"Keeping accounts is a very useful and important thing. I keep mine ; and mamma says I have great arth-met-i-cal talent," added the pale child, who studied too much.

"Come, children ; it's time for dinner. Fancy, you can take the girl to the house ; and your uncle will do what he thinks best about letting you keep her," said Miss Fairbairn, piling them into the basket-wagon.

Fancy kept Lorelei close beside her ; and as soon as they reached the great hotel, where they all were staying with mothers and fathers, uncles or aunts, she took her to kind Aunt Fiction, who was interested at once in the friendless child so mysteriously found. She was satisfied with the little she could discover, and promised to keep her, — for a time, at least.

"We can imagine all kinds of romantic things about her ; and, by and by, some interesting story may be found out concerning her. I can make her useful in many ways ; and she shall stay."

As Aunt Fiction laid her hand on the mermaid's head, as if claiming her for her own, Uncle Fact came stalking in, with his note-book in his hand, and his spectacles on his nose. Now, though they were married, these two persons were very unlike. Aunt Fiction was a graceful, picturesque woman ; who told stories charmingly, wrote poetry and novels, was very much beloved by young folks, and was the friend of some of the most famous people in the world. Uncle Fact was a grim, grave, decided man ; whom it was impossible to bend or change. He was very useful to every one ; knew an im-



FANCY'S FRIEND.

mense deal ; and was always taking notes of things he saw and heard, to be put in a great encyclopædia he was making. He didn't like romance, loved the truth, and wanted to get to the bottom of every thing. He was always trying to make little Fancy more sober, well-behaved, and learned ; for she was a freakish, dreamy, yet very lovable and charming child. Aunt Fiction petted her to her heart's content, and might have done her harm, if Uncle Fact had not had a hand in her education ; for the lessons of both were necessary to her, as to all of us.

" Well, well, well ! who is this ? " he said briskly, as he turned his keen eyes and powerful glasses on the newcomer.

Aunt Fiction told him all the children had said ; but he answered impatiently,—

" Tut, tut ! my dear : I want the facts of the case. You are apt to exaggerate ; and Fancy is not to be relied on. If the child isn't a fool, she must know more about herself than she pretends. Now, answer truly, Luly, where did you come from ? "

But the little mermaid only shook her head, and answered as before, " Fancy found me on the beach, and wants me to stay with her. I'll do her no harm : please, let me stay."

" She has evidently been washed ashore from some wreck, and has forgotten all about herself. Her wonderful beauty, her accent, and these ornaments show that she is some foreign child," said Aunt Fiction, pointing to the earrings.

" Nonsense ! my dear : those are white pebbles, not pearls ; and, if you examine them, you will find that those bracelets are the ones you gave Fancy as a reward

for so well remembering the facts I gave her about coral," said the uncle, who had turned Lorelei round and round, pinched her cheek, felt her hair, and examined her frock through the glasses which nothing escaped.

"She may stay, and be my little playmate, mayn't she? I'll take care of her; and we shall be very happy together," cried Fancy eagerly.

"One can't be sure of that till one has tried. You say you will take care of her: have you got any money to pay her board, and buy her clothes?" asked her uncle.

"No; but I thought you'd help me," answered Fancy wistfully.

"Never say you'll do a thing till you are sure you can," said Uncle Fact, as he took notes of the affair, thinking they might be useful by and by. "I've no objection to your keeping the girl, if, after making inquiries about her, she proves to be a clever child. She can stay awhile; and, when we go back to town, I'll put her in one of our charity schools, where she can be taught to earn her living. Can you read, Luly?"

"No," said the mermaid, opening her eyes.

"Can you write and cipher?"

"What is that?" asked Lorelei innocently.

"Dear me! what ignorance!" cried Uncle Fact.

"Can you sew, or tend babies?" asked Aunt Fiction gently.

"I can do nothing but play and sing, and comb my hair."

"I see! I see! — some hand-organ man's girl. Well, I'm glad you keep your hair smooth, — that's more than Fancy does," said Uncle Fact.

"Let us hear you sing," whispered his little niece ; and, in a voice as musical as the sound of ripples breaking on the shore, Lorelei sung a little song that made Fancy dance with delight, charmed Aunt Fiction, and softened Uncle Fact's hard face in spite of himself.

"Very well, very well, indeed : you have a good voice. I'll see that you have proper teaching ; and, by and by, you can get your living by giving singing-lessons," he said, turning over the leaves of his book, to look for the name of a skilful teacher ; for he had lists of every useful person, place, and thing under the sun.

Lorelei laughed at the idea ; and Fancy thought singing for gold, not love, a hard way to get one's living.

Inquiries were made ; but nothing more was discovered, and neither of the children would speak : so the strange child lived with Fancy, and made her very happy. The other children didn't care much about her ; for with them she was shy and cold, because she knew, if the truth was told, they would not believe in her. Fancy had always played a good deal by herself, because she never found a mate to suit her ; now she had one, and they enjoyed each other very much. Lorelei taught her many things besides new games ; and Aunt Fiction was charmed with the pretty stories Fancy repeated to her, while Uncle Fact was astonished at the knowledge of marine plants and animals which she gained without any books. Lorelei taught her to swim, like a fish ; and the two played such wonderful pranks in the water that people used to come down to the beach when they bathed. In return, Fancy tried to teach her friend to read and write and sew ; but Lorelei couldn't learn much, though she loved her little teacher dearly, and every evening sung her to sleep with beautiful lullabies.

There was a great deal of talk about the curious stranger ; for her ways were odd, and no one knew what to make of her. She would eat nothing but fruit and shell-fish, and drink nothing but salt water. She didn't like tight clothes ; but would have run about in a loose, green robe, with bare feet and flying hair, if Uncle Fact would have allowed it. Morning, noon, and night, she plunged into the sea,—no matter what the weather might be ; and she would sleep on no bed but one stuffed with dried sea-weed. She made lovely chains of shells ; found splendid bits of coral ; and dived where no one else dared, to bring up wonderful plants and mosses. People offered money for these things ; but she gave them all to Fancy and Aunt Fiction, of whom she was very fond. It was curious to see the sort of people who liked both Fancy and her friend,—poets, artists ; delicate, thoughtful children ; and a few old people, who had kept their hearts young in spite of care and time and trouble. Dashing young gentlemen, fine young ladies, worldly-minded and money-loving men and women, and artificial, unchildlike children, the two friends avoided carefully ; and these persons either made fun of them, neglected them entirely, or seemed to be unconscious that they were alive. The others they knew at a glance ; for their faces warmed and brightened when the children came, they listened to their songs and stories, joined in their plays, and found rest and refreshment in their sweet society.

"This will do for a time ; as Fancy is getting strong, and not entirely wasting her days, thanks to me ! But our holiday is nearly over ; and, as soon as I get back to town, I'll take that child to the Ragged Refuge, and see what they can make of her," said Uncle Fact, who was never quite satisfied about Lorelei ; because he could

find out so little concerning her. He was walking over the beach as he said this, after a hard day's work on his encyclopædia. He sat down on a rock in a quiet place ; and, instead of enjoying the lovely sunset, he fell to studying the course of the clouds, the state of the tide, and the temperature of the air, till the sound of voices made him peep over the rock. Fancy and her friend were playing there, and the old gentleman waited to see what they were about. Both were sitting with their little bare feet in the water ; Lorelei was stringing pearls, and Fancy plaiting a crown of pretty green rushes.

"I wish I could go home, and get you a string of finer pearls than these," said Lorelei ; "but it is too far away, and I cannot swim now as I used to do."

"I must look into this. The girl evidently knows all about herself, and can tell, if she chooses," muttered Uncle Fact, getting rather excited over this discovery.

"Never mind the pearls : I'd rather have you, dear," said Fancy lovingly. "Tell me a story while we work, or sing me a song ; and I'll give you my crown."

"I'll sing you a little song that has got what your uncle calls a moral to it," said Lorelei, laughing mischievously. Then, in her breezy little voice, she sang the story of —

THE ROCK AND THE BUBBLE.

OH ! a bare, brown rock
Stood up in the sea,
The waves at its feet
Dancing merrily.

A little bubble
Once came sailing by,
And thus to the rock
Did it gayly cry, —

“ Ho ! clumsy brown stone,
 Quick, make way for me :
 I'm the fairest thing
 That floats on the sea.

“ See my rainbow-robe,
 See my crown of light,
 My glittering form,
 So airy and bright.

“ O'er the waters blue,
 I'm floating away,
 To dance by the shore
 With the foam and spray.

“ Now, make way, make way ;
 For the waves are strong,
 And their rippling feet
 Bear me fast along.”

But the great rock stood
 Straight up in the sea :
 It looked gravely down,
 And said pleasantly, —

“ Little friend, you must
 Go some other way ;
 For I have not stirred
 This many a long day.

“ Great billows have dashed,
 And angry winds blown ;
 But my sturdy form
 Is not overthrown.

“ Nothing can stir me
 In the air or sea ;
 Then, how can I move,
 Little friend, for thee ? ”

Then the waves all laughed,
In their voices sweet ;
And the sea-birds looked,
From their rocky seat,

At the bubble gay,
Who angrily cried,
While its round cheek glowed
With a foolish pride, —

“ You *shall* move for me ;
And you shall not mock
At the words I say,
You ugly, rough rock.

“ Be silent, wild birds !
Why stare you so ?
Stop laughing, rude waves,
And help me to go !

“ For I am the queen
Of the ocean here,
And this cruel stone
Cannot make me fear.”

Dashing fiercely up,
With a scornful word,
Foolish Bubble broke ;
But Rock never stirred.

Then said the sea-birds,
Sitting in their nests,
To the little ones
Leaning on their breasts, —

“ Be not like Bubble,
Headstrong, rude, and vain,
Seeking by violence
Your object to gain ;

"But be like the rock,
Steadfast, true, and strong,
Yet cheerful and kind,
And firm against wrong."

"Heed, little birdlings,
And wiser you'll be
For the lesson learned
To-day by the sea."

"Well, to be sure, the song *has* got a moral, if that silly Fancy only sees it," said Uncle Fact, popping up his bald head again as the song ended.

"I thank you: that's a good little song for me. But, Lorelei, are you sorry you came to be my friend?" cried Fancy; for, as she bent to lay the crown on the other's head, she saw that she was looking wistfully down into the water that kissed her feet.

"Not yet: while you love me, I am happy, and never regret that I ceased to be a mermaid for your sake," answered Lorelei, laying her soft cheek against her friend's.

"How happy I was the day my play-mermaid changed to a real one!" said Fancy. "I often want to tell people all about that wonderful thing, and let them know who you really are: then they'd love you as I do, instead of calling you a little vagabond."

"Few would believe our story; and those that did would wonder at me,—not love me as you do. They would put me in a cage, and make a show of me; and I should be so miserable I should die. So don't tell who I am, will you?" said Lorelei earnestly.

"Never," cried Fancy, clinging to her.

"But, my deary, what will you do when uncle sends you away from me, as he means to do as soon as we go

home? I can see you sometimes; but we cannot be always together, and there is no ocean for you to enjoy in the city."

"I shall bear it, if I can, for your sake; if I cannot, I shall come back here, and wait until you come again next year."

"No, no! I will not be parted from you; and, if uncle takes you away, I'll come here, and be a mermaid with you," cried Fancy.

The little friends threw their arms about each other, and were so full of their own feelings that they never saw Uncle Fact's tall shadow flit across them, as he stole away over the soft sand. Poor old gentleman! he was in a sad state of mind, and didn't know what to do; for in all his long life he had never been so puzzled before.

"A mermaid indeed!" he muttered. "I always thought that child was a fool, and now I'm sure of it. She thinks she is a mermaid, and has made Fancy believe it. I've told my wife a dozen times that she let Fancy read too many fairy tales and wonder-books. Her head is full of nonsense, and she is just ready to believe any ridiculous story that is told her. Now, what on earth shall I do? If I put Luly in an asylum, Fancy will break her heart, and very likely they will both run away. If I leave them together, Luly will soon make Fancy as crazy as she is herself, and I shall be mortified by having a niece who insists that her playmate is a mermaid. Bless my soul! how absurd it all is!"

Aunt Fiction had gone to town to see her publishers about a novel she had written, and he didn't like to tell the queer story to any one else; so Uncle Fact thought it over, and decided to settle the matter at once. When the children came in, he sent Fancy to wait for him in the

library, while he talked alone with Lorelei. He did his best; but he could do nothing with her,—she danced and laughed, and told the same tale as before, till the old gentleman confessed that he had heard their talk on the rocks: then she grew very sad, and owned that she *was* a mermaid. This made him angry, and he wouldn't believe it for an instant; but told her it was impossible, and she must say something else.

Lorelei could say nothing else, and wept bitterly when he would not listen; so he locked her up and went to Fancy, who felt as if something dreadful was going to happen when she saw his face. He told her all he knew, and insisted that Lorelei was foolish or naughty to persist in such a ridiculous story.

"But, uncle, I really did make a mermaid; and she really did come alive, for I saw the figure float away, and then Lorelei appeared," said Fancy, very earnestly.

"It's very likely you made a figure, and called it a mermaid: it would be just the sort of thing you'd do," said her uncle. "But it is impossible that any coming alive took place, and I won't hear any such nonsense. You didn't see this girl come out of the water; for she says you never looked up, till she touched you. She was a real child, who came over the beach from somewhere; and you fancied she looked like your figure, and believed the silly tale she told you. It is my belief that she is a sly, bad child; and the sooner she is sent away the better for you."

Uncle Fact was so angry, and talked so loud, that Fancy felt frightened and bewildered; and began to think he might be right about the mermaid part, though she hated to give up the little romance.

"If I agree that she *is* a real child, won't you let her

stay, uncle?" she said, forgetting that, if she lost her faith, her friend was lost also.

"Ah! then you have begun to come to your senses, have you? and are ready to own that you don't believe in mermaids and such rubbish?" cried Uncle Fact, stopping in his tramp up and down the room.

"Why, if you say there never were and never can be any, I suppose I *must* give up my fancy; but I'm sorry," sighed the child.

"That's my sensible girl! Now, think a minute, my dear, and you will also own that it is best to give up the child as well as the mermaid," said her uncle briskly.

"Oh! no: we love one another; and she is good, and I can't give her up," cried Fancy.

"Answer me a few questions; and I'll prove that she isn't good, that you don't love her, and that you *can* give her up," said Uncle Fact, and numbered off the questions on his fingers as he spoke.

"Didn't Luly want you to deceive us, and every one else, about who she was?"

"Yes, sir."

"Don't you like to be with her better than with your aunt or myself?"

"Yes, sir."

"Hadn't you rather hear her songs and stories than learn your lessons?"

"Yes, sir."

"Isn't it wrong to deceive people, to love strangers more than those who are a father and mother to you, and to like silly tales better than useful lessons?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. Then, don't you see, that, if Luly makes

you do these wrong and ungrateful things, she is not a good child, nor a fit playmate for you?"

Fancy didn't answer ; for she couldn't feel that it was so, though he made it seem so. When Uncle Fact talked in that way, she always got confused and gave up ; for she didn't know how to argue. He was right in a certain way ; but she felt as if she was right also in another way, though she could not prove it : so she hung her head, and let her tears drop on the carpet one by one.

Uncle Fact didn't mean to be unkind, but he did mean to have his own way ; and, when he saw the little girl's sad face, he took her on his knee, and said, more mildly, —

"Do you remember the story about the German Lorelei, who sung so sweetly, and lured people to death in the Rhine ?"

"Yes, uncle ; and I like it," answered Fancy, looking up.

"Well, my dear, your Lorelei will lead you into trouble, if you follow her. Suppose she is what you think her,— a mermaid : it is her delight to draw people into the water, where, of course, they drown. If she is what I think her,— a sly, bad child, who sees that you are very simple, and who means to get taken care of without doing any thing useful,— she will spoil you in a worse way than if you followed her into the sea. I've got no little daughter of my own, and I want to keep you as safe and happy as if you were mine. I don't like this girl, and I want you to give her up for my sake. Will you, Fancy?"

While her uncle said these things, all the beauty seemed to fall away from her friend, all the sweetness from their love, and all her faith in the little dream which had made her so happy. Mermaids became

treacherous, unlovely, unreal creatures ; and Lorelei seemed like a naughty, selfish child, who deceived her, and made her do wrong things. Her uncle had been very kind to her all her life ; and she loved him, was grateful, and wanted to show that she was, by pleasing him. But her heart clung to the friend she had made, trusted, and loved ; and it seemed impossible to give up the shadow, even though the substance was gone. She put her hands before her face for a moment ; then laid her arms about the old man's neck, and whispered, with a little sob,—

“ I'll give her up ; but you'll be kind to her, because I was fond of her once.”

As the last word left Fancy's lips, a long, sad cry sounded through the room ; Lorelei sprung in, gave her one kiss, and was seen to run swiftly toward the beach, wringing her hands. Fancy flew after ; but, when she reached the shore, there was nothing to be seen but the scattered pebbles, shells, and weeds that made the mock mermaid, floating away on a receding wave.

“ Do you believe now ? ” cried Fancy, weeping bitterly, as she pointed to the wreck of her friend, and turned reproachfully toward Uncle Fact, who had followed in great astonishment.

The old gentleman looked well about him ; then shook his head, and answered decidedly,—

“ No, my dear, I *don't*. It's an odd affair ; but, I've no doubt, it will be cleared up in a natural way sometime or other.”

But there he was mistaken ; for this mystery never *was* cleared up. Other people soon forgot it, and Fancy never spoke of it ; yet she made very few friends, and, though she learned to love and value Uncle Fact as well

as Aunt Fiction, she could not forget her dearest playmate. Year after year she came back to the sea-side; and the first thing she always did was to visit the place where she used to play, and stretch her arms toward the sea, crying tenderly,—

“ O my little friend! come back to me ! ”

But Lorelei never came again.



THE NAUTILUS.

A FAIRY BOAT-SONG.

LAUNCH our boat from the yellow sand,
Say farewell to the blooming land,
Furl airy wings, fold the mantles blue,
Drink one last cup of honey dew ;
For we must leave our fairy home
On a moonlight voyage through the foam.

Spread the silken sail
To the summer gale,
Low singing across the sea ;
Float away, float away,
Through foam and spray,
As if o'er a flowery lea !

Oh ! fear no storm nor cloudy frown,
Though mightier ships than ours go down :
Our helmsman laughs at the wildest gale,
As he drops anchor and furls his sail ;
For He who guides the sparrow's wing,
Whose love upholds the frailest thing,
Has given a spell,
To protect the shell
Through the waves' tumultuous flow.
When tempest-tost,
Unwrecked, unlost,
It sinks to calmer depths below.

Watch, dear mates, by the fading light,
 The mariner small who steers aright,
 By compass and chart unseen, yet true,
 And ferries over an elfin crew,
 With tiny rudder and sail and oar,
 Voyaging safely from shore to shore ;

While the mermaids fair,
 With their shining *ta'ri*,
 Glide up from their ocean home.
 “Come away, come away !”
 The sea-sprites say,
 As they beckon through the foam.

O evening star ! serene and still,
 Guard us with magic care from ill !
 O summer moon ! like herald bright,
 Guide us along thy path of light !
 O friendly waves ! bear on your breast
 Elfin wanderers to their rest !

See, how low and dim,
 On the ocean’s rim,
 Lies the shore we left behind ;
 Farewell ! farewell !
 Let the echo swell,
 Bear it home on your wings, sweet wind !



FAIRY FIREFLY.

CHILD.

O FIREFLY ! I have caught you fast :
 Don't flutter in a rage ;
But shine for me a little while
 Here in this dainty cage.
Why are you wandering so late,
 With your small lamp alight,
When bird and bee and butterfly
 Are sleeping through the night ?
Come, tell to me a fairy tale ;
 Amuse me while you stay ;
And, when it's time to go to bed,
 You shall safely fly away.

FIREFLY.

I'll tell my own sad story, child,
 Here shining in your net ;
And, though I fly away so soon,
 I pray you, don't forget.—
I was a lovely fairy once,
 Blithe as an early lark ;
And in my little bosom shone
 A beautiful, bright spark :
That was my elfin spirit, dear ;
 And, while I lived aright,
It was to me a guiding star,
 To lead me to the light.

I should have loved the blessed sun,
And tried to follow him ;
But, no, I turned my face away,
And my bright spark grew dim.
My daily duties were not done ;
I did not tend the flowers ;
I did not help the honey-bees
Improve their shining hours ;
No baby butterfly I taught
To spread its tender wing ;
No young bird ever learned of me
The airy songs we sing.
I left my playmates, one and all,
So innocent, so gay, —
I would not listen to their words,
But coldly turned away.
All day I slept, with folded wings,
Lulled by the singing brook,
Where tall ferns made a shady tent,
And guarded my still nook.
But, when the stars came out, I woke ;
I loved the meadows damp ;
I liked to hear the cricket sing ;
To watch the glow-worm's lamp,
The round-eyed owl, and beetle fierce,
The hungry, buzzing gnat,
The giddy moth, the croaking frog,
And stealthy-wing'd bat.
These were the friends I freely chose
These, and the primrose pale ;
I did not even seek to know
A star or nightingale.
I turned away from lovely things,
I revelled in the dark,
And day by day more faintly shone
My precious bosom-spark,
Until, at last, it came to be
This feeble, fitful light,
And my dim eyes no power had
To see, except by night.

My fairy form passed quite away ;
Alas ! I'd gladly die,
For 'tis my punishment to be
A wandering firefly.
Ah ! now I long for all I've lost :
My mates are flown away ;
The birds and bees I pine to see,
But cannot seek by day.
I haunt the flowers all the night,
Hoping a home to win, —
The doors are shut : all are asleep :
I knock ; none let me in.
I'm tired of the friends I made ;
I hate the teasing gnat,
The hooting owl, the cricket shrill,
The beetle, and the bat.
My only mates are the poor moths ;
They seek and love the light,
Though they, like me, sleep all day long,
And only fly by night.
Once they were butterflies, you know,
And floated in the sun ;
But they are doomed to expiate
The wrongs which they have done,
By madly longing for the shine
That blinds their feeble eye,
Yet draws them, like a dreadful spell,
To flutter, burn, and die.
O little child ! be warned in time ;
Guard well your bosom spark,
Else it will slowly fade away,
And leave you in the dark.
Feed it with all things fair and good :
Then gloomy clouds may roll,
But cannot shadow in your life, —
Tis sunshine of the soul.

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